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CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY:

OR,

AN ATTEMPT TO DISPLAY

THE

EVIDENCE AND EXCELLENCE

OF

REVEALED RELIGION.

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*Hoc PHILOSOPHIÆ genus in affectibus situm est, verius quam in
syllogismis; vita est magis, quam disputatio; AFFLATUS potius
quam eruditio; transformatio magis, quam ratio. ERASMUS.*

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CHRISTIANITY

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P R E F A C E.

As every attempt to illustrate and recommend opinions on RELIGION, which oppose prejudices, is peculiarly obnoxious to the misconceptions of the ignorant, the misrepresentation of the malevolent, and the rash censure of the thoughtless; (who rudely and hastily condemn, what they scarcely allow themselves even time to understand;) I think it proper to entreat all who honour this book with any degree of their attention, duly to consider the AUTHORITIES, human as well as scriptural, on which it is founded; and not to reject doctrines in which their own happiness is most deeply concerned, till they shall have invalidated those authorities, and proved themselves superior in sagacity, learning, and piety, to the great men whose sentiments I have cited in sup-

port of my own. Let the firm phalanx of surrounding authorities be first fairly routed, before the opponents level their arrows, even bitter words, at him who, in these papers, ventures to enforce a doctrine, unfashionable indeed, but certainly the doctrine of the Gospel.

There is no doubt but that my subject is the most momentous which can fall under the contemplation of a human being; and I therefore claim for it, as the happiness of mankind is at stake, a dispassionate and unprejudiced attention.

The moral world, as well as the political, appears, at present, to be greatly out of order. Moral confusion, indeed, naturally produces political. Let all who love their species, or their country, calmly consider whether the neglect or rejection of Christianity may not be the real cause of both: and let those who are thus persuaded, co-operate with every attempt to revive and diffuse the TRUE SPIRIT OF THE GOSPEL. "Let us meekly instruct
"those

P R E F A C E

“ those that OPPOSE THEMSELVES *,” (if God, peradventure, will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the TRUTH,) “ not being overcome of evil, “ but overcoming evil with good †.”

Nor let a private clergyman, however inconsiderable, be thought to step out of his province, in thus endeavouring to tranquillize the tumult of the world, by calling the attention of erring and wretched mortals to the gospel of peace. He is justified, not only by the general principles of humanity, but by the particular command of the religion of which he is a minister. Thus saith the Apostle :

“ Feed the flock of God, as much as “ lieth in you, *taking the oversight* thereof, “ not by *constraint*, but *willingness*; not “ for FILTHY LUCRE, but of a ready “ mind †. Take heed to ALL the flock, “ over the which the HOLY GHOST hath “ made you *overseers*, to feed the CHURCH “ of God, which he hath purchased with “ his own blood §.”

* 2 Tim. ii. 25.

† Romans, xii. 21.

‡ 1 Pet. v, 2.

§ Acts, xx. 28.

This I have humbly attempted; and, in imitation of a most excellent prelate*, I have adapted my book to ALL; yet various parts of it more particularly to *various descriptions* of men; some to the great, some to the learned, but the greater part to the PEOPLE: remembering the Apostle's example, who says, "To the weak became
 " I as weak, that I might gain the weak:
 " I am made all things to all men, that
 " I might by all means save some; and
 " this I do for the GOSPEL'S SAKE, that I
 " might be a partaker thereof with
 " you †."

And now, readers, before you proceed any farther, let me be permitted to say to you, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with you," in your progress through this book, and also through life, even to its close.

* Bishop Sanderson, who preached in an appropriate manner, *ad aulam, ad clerum, ad populum*.— See the titles of his Sermons.

† 1 Cor. xi. 22.

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ERRATA.

- Page 50. line 21. for Payne read Paine.
204. — 5. for words of grace read world
of grace.
272. — 23. for pretensions read pretension.
214. — ult. for word read world.
297. — 4. in the note, for Deus read Deum.
Cum paucis aliis.

CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY;
OR,
THE EVIDENCE AND EXCELLENCE
OF
REVEALED RELIGION.

SECTION I.

Cupimus enim investigare quid verum sit; neque id solum, sed quod cum veritate, PIETATEM quoque præterea erga Deum habeat conjunctam.

SADDLET.

INTRODUCTORY.

I ENTER on the subject of this volume with unaffected diffidence. I tread on holy ground with awe. Though much of my life, devoted to letters from the earliest age, has been spent in reading the best writers on the Christian doctrine, and more in contemplation of it, yet a sense of its high importance, and of my own fallibility, has long restrained the impulse which prompted me to engage in its public discussion.

cussion. Nothing but conscious rectitude of intention, co-operating with the hope of obtaining the aid of God's holy Spirit and the reader's indulgence, could animate the tremulous mind in an enterprise to which it feels and avows itself unequal. A conviction that the subject is peculiarly seasonable, has contributed to overcome reluctance. The TIMES indeed appear to me to call upon every professor of Christianity to vindicate, in the manner best adapted to his abilities and opportunities, its controverted truth, its insulted honour; and if I shall be fortunate enough to communicate one suggestion to the wavering mind, which may conduce to this great purpose, my labour will not be in vain, nor my undertaking deemed rashly adventurous. I shall have accomplished my wish. To diffuse the sunshine of religious hope and confidence over the shadowy path of life; to dissipate the gloom of doubt and despair; to save a soul from death; objects so desirable, inspire an ardour which enables zeal to triumph over timidity.

That

That unbelief in Christ is increasing in the present age, and that the spirit of the times is rather favourable to its increase, has been asserted by high authority, and is too notorious to admit denial. The apostacy of a great nation, in the most enlightened and polished part of Europe; the public, unblushing avowal of atheism among some of its leaders; the multiplication of books on the Continent, in which Christianity is treated as a mere mode of fanaticism; all these circumstances have combined, with others, to cause not only an indifference to the religion of Christ, but contempt and aversion to his very name. It were easy to cite contumelious reproaches of his person, as well as audacious denials of his claim to divine authority. But I will not pollute my page, which, however it may be deformed by error, shall not be stained with the transfusion of blasphemy. It is to be wished that all such works could be consigned to immediate and everlasting oblivion; but, I am sorry to say that they are diffused

with an industry, which, if it appeared in making profelytes to virtue, would be in the highest degree meritorious. Almost every individual in our own country can now read; and manuals of infidelity, replete with plausible arguments, in language level to the lowest classes, are circulated among the people, at a price which places them within reach of the poorest reader. They are despised by the rich and neglected by the learned, but they fall into the hands of the poor, to whom any thing in *print* bears the stamp of authority. At the same time, it must be lamented that there are treatises of a higher order, on the side of infidelity, which come recommended to the superior ranks, to men of knowledge and education, with all the charms of wit and elegance.

But it cannot be said that the apologists and defenders of Christianity, in our country, have been few, or unfurnished with abilities natural and acquired. Great have been the efforts of our profoundest scholars, both professional divines and laymen,
in

in maintaining the cause of Christianity, and repelling by argument, by ridicule, by invective, by erudition, the assaults of the infidel. But what shall we say? Notwithstanding their stupendous labours, continued with little intermission, the great cause which they maintained, is evidently, at this moment, on the decline. Though many of them, not contented with persuasion and argument, have professed to DEMONSTRATE the truth of the Christian religion, it is certain that a very great number of men in Christian countries continue unpersuaded, unconvinced, and totally blind to their *demonstration*. Such being the case, after all their voluminous productions, is it not fair to conclude that their modes of defence, however celebrated, are either erroneous or defective? Had their success been equal to their labours and pretensions, infidelity must now have been utterly exterminated.

I feel a sincere respect for the learned labours of theologists, the subtilty of schoolmen, the erudition of critics, the
B 3 ingenuity

ingenuity of controversialists; but I cannot help thinking that their productions have contributed rather to the amusement of re-cluse scholars already persuaded of Christianity, than to the conversion of the infidel, the instruction of the PEOPLE. It appears to me, that some of the most elaborate of the writings in defence of Christianity are too cold in their manner, too metaphysical or abstruse in their arguments, too little animated with the spirit of piety, to produce any great or durable effect on the heart of man, formed as he is, not only with intellectual powers, but with fine feelings and a glowing imagination. They touch not the trembling fibres of sensibility. They are insipid to the palate of the people. They have no attractions for the POOR, the great multitude to whom the *gospel* was particularly *preached*. They are scarcely intelligible but to scholars in their closets, and while they amuse, without convincing the understanding, they leave the most susceptible part of man, his bosom, unaffected.

The

The busy world, eager in pursuit of wealth, honour, pleasure, pays them no regard; though they are the very persons whose attention to religion, which they are too apt to forget entirely, ought chiefly to be solicited. The academic recluse, the theologist by profession, may read them as a task or as an amusement; but he considers them as works of erudition and exercises of ingenuity, claiming great praise as the product of literary leisure, but little adapted to impress the heart, or convert the infidel and the profligate. The people are *erring and straying* like lost sheep, but in these calls they cannot recognize the voice of the shepherd. Such works indeed seldom reach the people; and while they are celebrated in academic cloisters, their very existence is unknown among the haunts of men, in the busy hum of cities; where it is most desirable that they should be known, because there the great majority of human creatures is assembled, and there also the poison of temptation chiefly requires the antidote of religion. What

avails it that defences of Christianity are very learned and very subtle, if they are so dry and unaffecting as to be confined in their effects to sequestered scholars, far removed from the active world, and probably so firmly settled in the faith, as to require no new persuasives, no additional proofs to render them faithful followers of Jesus Christ?

Apologies and attacks of this kind have very little effect in silencing infidel writers or changing their opinions. They frequently furnish fresh matter for dispute, and indeed put arms into the hands of the enemy. By provoking discussion on points which were at rest, they raise sophistry from its slumbers, and blow the trumpet of polemical wars, which do great mischief before the re-establishment of peace. In the issue, the contending parties are silenced rather from weariness in the contest, than from conviction; and *Te Deum*, as is usual in other wars, is sung by those who are said to be vanquished, as well as those who claim the honour of undisputed victory.

Thus

Thus it has happened that the writings of men, no less benevolent in their intentions than able in their exertions, have sometimes not only done no good to their cause, but great injury. They have revived old cavils and objections, or invented new, in order to display ingenuity in refuting them; cavils and objections which have frequently been answered, or which might never have occurred, but which, when once they have occurred, produce *suspicion* and unsettled notions on topics never doubted, and among honest men whose faith was firmly established. Such conduct is like that of a physician, who should administer doses of arsenic to his patients, in order to prove to them, at their risk, the sovereign power of his *nostrum*. The venom, finding a constitution favourable to its operation, triumphantly prevails, and the preventive remedy cannot rescue the sufferer from his hapless fate.

I am persuaded, that even a sensible, thinking, and learned man might live his

whole life in piety and peace, without ever dreaming of those objections to Christianity, which some of its most celebrated defenders have collected together from all ages and a great variety of *neglected* books, and then combined in a single portable volume, so as to render it a convenient *SYNOPSIS of infidelity*. What must be the consequence? It must at least disturb the repose of the sensible, thinking, and learned man; and if it should be read and understood by the simple, the unlearned, the unthinking, and the *ill-disposed*, I am of opinion that its *objections* would be studied, its *solutions* neglected; and thus a very large number of *recruits* enlisted volunteers in the army of unbelievers.

As an exemplification of what I have here advanced, I mention, in this place, Bishop Warburton's View of Lord Bolingbroke's Philosophy. There the unbeliever sees the scattered arguments of scepticism and unbelief all picked and culled for him, without any trouble of his own, and marked with inverted commas, so as to direct

rest the eye, without loss of time, to their immediate perusal. The book becomes an *anthologia* of infidelity. The flowers are gathered from the stalks, and conveniently tied up in a nosegay. The essence is extracted and put into a phial commodious for the pocket, and fitted for hourly use. The late bishop Horne, in his facetious Letters on Infidelity, has also collected passages from *obscure* books and pamphlets, and sent them abroad in such a manner as must of necessity cause them to be read and received, where they never would have found their way by their native force. These ingenious and well-meaning divines resuscitate the dead, and give life to the still-born or abortive offspring of dullness and malignity. I might mention many more instances of similar imprudence, in men of the deepest erudition and the sincerest piety; but I am unwilling to follow their example, in pointing out to unbelievers compendiums, abridgments, and manuals of sceptical cavil. To say in their excuse that they *refute* those arguments

which they insert so liberally from the writings of the unbeliever, may prove our candour, but not our judgment or knowledge of human nature. Evil is learned sooner and remembered longer than good; and it would be better to let many pamphlets of the deists sink into oblivion, than to preserve and extend them, by extracting their most noxious parts, and mixing them with the productions of men of learning and piety. The refutations are often long, laboured, and tedious, while the objections are short and lively. They are therefore either not read or soon forgotten, while a flippant sarcasm attracts attention and fixes itself in the memory. It must also be allowed, that the refutations are too often unsatisfactory: and that the weakness of a defence invites new attacks, and gives fresh courage to the enemy.

I think the style and manner of some among the celebrated defenders of Christianity extremely improper. It is not respectful. It treats *Jesus Christ* as if he were an inferior to the person who takes
upon

upon him to examine, as he phrases it, the *pretensions* of Jesus Christ. To speak in an authoritative, inquisitorial language of the author of that religion by which the writer himself professes to hope for salvation, can never serve the cause of Christianity. Think of a poor, frail, sinful mortal sitting a self-appointed judge, and like a lawyer in a human court of judicature, arraigning Jesus Christ, the Lord of life, just as a venal solicitor might have questioned the two thieves that were crucified with him, had they been accused at a modern police-office. The cold yet authoritative style of the tribunal has been much used in *examining*, as it is called, that religion which brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. You would think the learned theologian, who assumes the office of an examiner, another Pontius Pilate. He sits in the seat of judgment, and with judicial importance coldly pronounces on the words and actions of that Saviour, whom he owns to be the great Captain of salvation. A *man* might say, and has said, to
In

In such defences or examinations, Jesus Christ is spoken of in terms that must divest him of his *glory*, and therefore vilify him in the eyes of the gainsayers, and all unthinking people. But how, on the contrary, do the *prophets* represent him? Language has no terms of magnificence adequate to his dignity.

The prophets describe JESUS CHRIST as the most august personage which it is possible to conceive. They speak of him indeed as the seed of *the woman* and the *Son of man*; but at the same time describe him of celestial race. They announce him as a being exalted above men and angels; above "all principality and power; as the " Word and the Wisdom of God, as the " eternal Son of the Father; as the Heir " of all things, by whom God made the " worlds; as the brightness of God's glory, " the express image of his person."

Thus speak the prophets of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Now let us hear an ingenious apologist and defender of him and his religion. A reverend
author,

author, highly estimable for his learning and ingenuity, and whom I sincerely esteem, speaking of Jesus Christ, in a book professedly written to vindicate his truth and honour, repeatedly calls him, "a Jewish *peasant*," and a "*peasant* of Galilee." For what are we comparing? says he, (in a comparison of Jesus Christ with Mahomet,) "a Galilean PEASANT, accompanied with a few fishermen, with a conqueror at the head of his army;" and again, in the next page, "a Jewish PEASANT overthrew the religion of the world."

Unbelievers are commonly men of the world; fascinated by its pomps and vanities. Is it the most likely means to overcome their prejudices, and teach them to bow the knee to Jesus, thus to lower his personal dignity? Was there any occasion for it? Do not the prophets, as I have just now observed, exalt him above every name? Why call him PEASANT? The term I think by no means appropriate to him, supposing that it were not an injudi-

cious degradation of his character in the eyes of unthinking worldlings and malignant unbelievers. There is something peculiarly disgusting in hearing dignified ecclesiastics, living in splendour and affluence entirely in consequence of the religion of Jesus Christ, speaking of him in their defences of his religion, as a PEASANT, as a person compared to themselves, vile and despicable. Such arguments as this appellation is meant to support, will never render service to Christianity. The representation becomes a stumbling-block and a rock of offence. I might however produce several other instances of great writers who have afforded precedents for such degrading appellations of Jesus Christ. But neither the infidel nor the Christian will easily believe that the man who calls his Saviour a *peasant*, after the glorious representations of him which the prophets give, feels that awe and veneration which is due to the Son of God, the Lord of life, the Saviour and Redeemer. I forbear to specify them. One instance is sufficient to point

point out my meaning, and shew the reason why some ingenious apologies for Christianity are totally ineffectual.

Dry argumentation and dull disquisition, unanimated by the spirit of piety and devotion, will never avail to convert unbelievers, and to diffuse the doctrines of Christianity. Life, death, heaven and hell, are subjects of too much importance to be treated by a sincere mind, duly impressed by them, with the coolness of a lawyer giving an opinion on a statute or case in which *another's* property or privileges are concerned. The spirit of piety seems to have been wanting in some of the most logical and metaphysical defenders of Christianity. They speak of Christ, when they are examining the truth of the doctrine, with calm indifference, as if they were dull virtuosos discussing the genuineness of a medal, or the authenticity of a manuscript, valuable only as an amusing curiosity. If St. Paul had been no warmer an advocate than certain famous apologists for Christ's doctrine, he would never have prevailed

prevailed with the Gentiles to relinquish their polytheism, and we of this island should, at this day, have remained in the darkness of idolatry. Without the spirit of piety, all proofs and defences of Christianity are a dead letter. The multitude will not even read them; and infidels, if they do not despise them too much to attend to them at all, will only read to find fresh matter for cavil and objection.

I may be wrong in my theory. I therefore appeal to fact. The fact is evident, that, notwithstanding all that has been written to *demonstrate* Christianity, by argument drawn from reasoning and history, infidelity has increased, and is every day increasing more and more. Let those who think the dry argumentative apologies irresistibly convincing, now bring them forward, and silence the gainsayers at once. The demonstrations of a Huet, the evidences of a Clarke, the reasonings of a Locke, a Grotius, a Hartley, should be presented in the most striking manner, by public authority, and if they are really efficacious in producing conviction,

conviction, we may be assured that infidelity will vanish at their appearance, like the mists of an autumnal morning, when the meridian sun breaks forth in full splendour. But the truth is, they are already very much diffused, and yet the Christian religion is said to be rapidly on the decline.

Therefore it cannot be blameable to attempt some other method of calling back the attention of erring mortals to the momentous truths of revelation.

I have conceived an idea that our *old* English divines were great adepts in genuine Christianity, and that their method of recommending it was judicious, because I know it was successful. There was much more piety in the last century than in the present; and there is every reason to believe that infidelity was rare. Bishop Hall appears to me to have been animated with the true spirit of Christianity; and I beg leave to convey my own ideas on the best method of diffusing that spirit, in his pleasingly-pious and simple language.

“ There

“ There is not,” says the venerable prelate, “ so much need of learning as of
“ grace to *apprehend* those things which
“ concern our *everlasting peace*; neither is
“ it our *brain* that must be set to work,
“ but our *HEARTS*. However excellent
“ the use of scholarship in all the sacred
“ employments of divinity; yet, in the
“ main act, which imports salvation, *skill*
“ must give place to *AFFECTION*. Happy is
“ the soul that is possessed of Christ, how
“ poor soever in all inferior endowments.
“ Ye are wide, O ye great wits, while ye
“ spend yourselves in curious questions
“ and learned extravagancies. Ye shall
“ find one touch of Christ more worth to
“ your souls than all your deep and labo-
“ rious disquisitions. *In vain shall ye seek*
“ *for this in your books*, if you miss it in
“ your *BOSOMS*. If you know all things,
“ and cannot say *I know whom I have be-*
“ *lieved*, you have but knowledge enough
“ to know yourselves completely misera-
“ ble. The deep mysteries of Godliness,
“ which, to the *great clerks* of the world,
“ are

“ are as a book clasped and sealed up, lie
“ open before him, (the pious and de-
“ vout man,) fair and legible; and while
“ those *book-men* know whom they have
“ heard of, *he knows whom he hath be-*
“ *lieved.*”

Christianity indeed, like the sun, discovers itself by its own lustre. It shines with unborrowed light on the devout heart. It wants little external proof, but carries its own evidence to him that is regenerate and born of the Spirit. “ The truth of Christianity,” says a pious author, “ is the
“ Spirit of God living and working
“ in it; and when this Spirit is not the
“ life of it, there the outward form
“ is but like the carcase of a departed
“ soul.”

Divinity has certainly been confused and perplexed by the learned. It requires to be disentangled and simplified. It appears to me to consist in this single point, the restoration of the *divine life*, the image of God, (lost or defaced at the fall,) by the operation of the Holy Ghost.

When

When this is restored, every other advantage of Christianity follows in course. PURE MORALS are absolutely necessary to the reception of the Holy Ghost, and an unavoidable consequence of his continuance. The attainment of GRACE is then the UNUM NECESSARIUM. It includes in it all gospel comfort, it teaches all virtue, and infallibly leads to LIGHT, life, and immortality.

SEC-

SECTION II.

*On the Sort of Evidence chiefly recommended
and attempted to be displayed in this
Treatise.*

Quid est fideliter Christo credere? est fideliter Dei mandata servare.

SALVIAN. *de Gub. lib. 3.*

I THINK it right to apprise my reader, on the very threshold, that if he expects a recapitulation of the external and historical evidence of Christianity, he will be disappointed. For all such evidence I must refer him to the great and illustrious names of voluminous theologists, who have filled with honour the professional chairs of universities, and splendidly adorned the annals of literature. I revere their virtuous characters; I highly appreciate their learned labours; I think the student who is abstracted from active life, and possesses leisure, may derive from them much amusement, while he increases his stores
of

of critical erudition, and becomes enabled to *discourse* or *dispute* on theology. But men, able to command their time, and competently furnished with ability for deep and extensive investigation, are but a small number in the mass of mankind. That systematic or speculative treatise which may delight and instruct such men, in the cool shade of philosophical retirement, will have little effect on the minds of others who constitute the multitude of mortals, eagerly engaged in providing for the wants of the passing day, or warmly contending for the glittering prizes of secular ambition. Indeed, I never heard that the laborious proofs of Christianity, in the historical and argumentative mode, ever converted any of those celebrated *authors* on the side of infidelity, who have, from time to time, spread an alarm through Christendom, and drawn forth the defensive pens of every church and university in Europe. The infidel wits wrote on in the same cause; deriving fresh matter for cavil from the arguments of the defenders; and re-assail-

ing the citadel with the very balls hurled from its battlements in superfluous profusion.

What then, it may be justly asked, have I to offer? What is the sort of evidence which I attempt to display? It is an internal EVIDENCE of the truth of the gospel, consequent on OBEDIENCE to its precepts. It is a sort of evidence, the mode of obtaining which is pointed out by JESUS CHRIST himself, in the following declaration: "If any man will do HIS will, he shall KNOW of the DOCTRINE whether it be of God*."

But how shall he know? BY THE ILLUMINATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD, which is promised by Christ, to those who do his will.

Therefore if any man seriously and earnestly desires to become a Christian, let him *begin*, whatever doubts he may entertain of the truth of Christianity, by *practising* those moral virtues, and cultivating those amiable dispositions, which the written gospel plainly requires, and the *grace*

* John, vii. 17.

of God will gradually remove the veil from his eyes and from his heart, so as to enable him to see and to love the things which belong to his peace, and which are revealed in the gospel only. Let him make the experiment and *persevere*. The result will be full conviction that Christianity is true. The sanctifying Spirit will precede, and the illuminating Spirit follow in consequence.

I take it for granted, that God has given all men the means of knowing that which it imports all men to know; but if, in order to gain the knowledge requisite to become a Christian, it is necessary to read such authors as Grotius, Limborch, Clarke, Lardner, or Warburton, how few, in the great mass of mankind, can possibly acquire that knowledge and consequent faith which are necessary to their salvation?

But every human being is capable of the *evidence* which arises from the divine illumination. It is offered to all. And they who reject it, and seek only the evidence which human means afford, shut
out

out the sun, and content themselves either with total darkness or the feeble light of a taper.

“ There is” (says the excellent Bishop Sanderfon) “ to the outward tender of
 “ grace in the ministry of the gospel, annexed an *inward* offer of the same to
 “ the HEART, by the SPIRIT of God going
 “ *along with his word*, which some of the
 “ schoolmen call *auxilium gratiæ generale*,
 “ sufficient of *itself* to convert the soul of
 “ the hearer, if he do not resist the Holy
 “ Ghost, and reject the grace offered;
 “ which, as it is grounded on these words,
 “ *Behold I stand at the door and knock*,
 “ and upon very many passages of *scripture*
 “ beside, so it standeth with *reason*
 “ that the offer, *if accepted*, should be
 “ *sufficient, ex parte sua*, to do the work,
 “ which, if *not* accepted, is sufficient to
 “ leave the person, not accepting the
 “ same, inexcusable.”

The outward testimony to the truth of the gospel, is certainly a very strong one; but yet it is found insufficient without the

inward testimony. The best understandings have remained unconvinced by the *outward testimony*; while the meanest have been fully persuaded by the co-operation of the *inward*, the divine irradiation of the Holy Ghost shining upon and giving lustre to the *letter* of revelation.

But because the doctrine of divine influence on the human mind is obnoxious to obloquy, I think it necessary to support it by the authority of some of the best men and soundest divines of this nation. Such are the prejudices entertained by many against the doctrine of divine influence and the witness of the Spirit, that I cannot proceed a step farther, with hope of success, till I have laid before my reader several passages in confirmation of it, from the writings of men who were the ornaments of their times, and who are at this day esteemed no less for their orthodoxy and powers of reason than their eloquence. I make no apology to my reader for the length of the quotations from them, because I am sure he will be a gainer, if
I keep

I keep silence that they may be heard in the interval. My object is to re-establish a declining opinion, which I think not only true, but of prime importance. I therefore withdraw myself occasionally, that I may introduce those advocates for it, whose very names must command attention. If I can but be *instrumental* in reviving the true Spirit of Christianity, by citing their authority, theirs be the praise, and mine the humble office of recommending and extending their salutary doctrine.

“ And if it shall be asked (to express myself nearly in the words of Archbishop Wake) why I so often chuse the drudgery of a *transcriber*, the reason is shortly this: I hoped that quotations from departed writers of great and deserved fame would find a more general and unprejudiced acceptance with all sorts of men, than any thing that could be written by any one now living, who, if esteemed by some, is yet in danger of being despised by more; whose prejudice to his person will not suffer them to reap any

benefit by any thing, however useful, that can come from him; while such passages as these which I cite must excite respect and attention, unmixed (as the authors are dead) with any malignant sentiment or prepossession against them, such as might close the eyes of the understanding against the radiance of truth *."

* The following text may, I think, confirm the opinion advanced in this Section, that the *best* EVIDENCE will arise from OBEDIENCE:

" And we are his witnesses of these things; and
" so is also the HOLY GHOST, whom God hath
" given to them, that OBEY him." Acts, v. 37.

SECTION III.

On the Prejudices entertained against this Sort of Evidence, and against all divine and supernatural Influence on the Mind of Man.

SINCE the time of Archbishop Laud, the most celebrated defenders of Christianity have thought it proper to expatiate, with peculiar zeal, on the excellence of natural religion. They probably had reasons for their conduct; but it must not be dissembled, that in extolling natural religion they have appeared to depreciate or supersede revelation. The doctrine of *supernatural assistance*, the great privilege of Christianity, has been very little enforced by them, and indeed rather discountenanced, as favouring of enthusiasm, and claiming, if true, a decided superiority over their favourite religion of nature.

Upon this subject, a very sensible writer thus expresses his opinion :

“ Towards making and forming a
“ Christian, if *supernatural assistance* of
“ the divine Spirit was necessary at the
“ beginning of the gospel, I do not see
“ what should render it less necessary at
“ any time since, nor why it may not be
“ expected now. Human learning and
“ human wisdom have rashly and vainly
“ usurped the place of it.

“ It is observable that these *old* princi-
“ ples are still to be found among dissen-
“ ters, in a good measure, which is the
“ reason why their opponents have drop-
“ ed the use of them.

“ As these doctrines were the princi-
“ ples and language of the dissenters, and
“ others, who followed the standard of
“ the Parliament against King Charles the
“ First, though they were not the parti-
“ cular motives of the war, nor could con-
“ tract any just blame from the unhappy
“ issue of that war ; yet, at the restoration
“ of King Charles the Second, the resent-
“ ment

“ment which took place against the per-
“sons of the dissenters, and ran high, I
“apprehend, led the church clergy not
“only to be angry with the *men*, but to
“forsake their principles too, though right
“and innocent in themselves, and afore-
“time held in common among all Pro-
“testants.”

This, the author thinks, gave rise to the
excessive zeal for enforcing natural religion,
and for mere moral preaching, to the ex-
clusion of the distinguishing doctrines of
Christ, and particularly those sublime my-
steries respecting the operation of the Holy
Ghost, the very life and soul of Christian-
ity.

“Every thing,” says he, “besides *mo-*
“*rality* began, from that time, to be
“branded with the odious term of *enthu-*
“*siasm* and *hypocrisy*. That the cause of
“religion (observes the same writer) has
“declined for many years, every person
“appears sensible. Among the various
“reasons assigned for it, the principal,
“in my opinion, is, that the established
c 5 “ministers

“ ministers have suffered it to die in their
 “ own hands, by departing from the old
 “ method of preaching, and from their
 “ first and original tenets; which has given
 “ countenance to what is called natural
 “ religion, in such a measure, as to shut
 “ out revealed religion and supersede the
 “ gospel.

“ It is in vain to cry out against deists
 “ and infidels, when the Protestant watch-
 “ men have deserted their post, and them-
 “ selves have opened a gap for the enemy.
 “ Learning and oratory, it must be own-
 “ ed, are arrived at great perfection, but our
 “ *true old divinity* is gone. Amid these splen-
 “ did trifles, the GOSPEL is *really* LOST*.”

It is certain, that the profligate court of Charles the Second, in its endeavours to discredit the dissenters, many of whom were admirable scholars and divines, as well as holy and exemplary men in private life, contributed much to explode all doctrines concerning the SPIRIT. Unfortunately those clergymen who wished to be

* See a Letter signed *Paulinus*, published in 1735.

favoured at court, too easily conformed their doctrines to its wishes; and arguments from the pulpit united with sarcasms from the seat of the scorner, to render all who maintained the doctrine of grace suspected of enthusiasm and hypocrisy. Ridicule, in the hands of the author of Hudibras, though intended only to serve political purposes, became a weapon that wounded religion in its vitals.

The sect of Christians denominated Quakers certainly entertain many right notions respecting divine influence: and therefore, as the Quakers were disliked by the church, the doctrines which they maintained were to be treated with contempt. The SPIRIT, whose operations they justly maintain, became, under the direction of worldly policy, a word of reproach to them. Consequently aspiring clergymen, wishing to avoid every doctrine which could retard their advancement, or fix a stigma of heterodoxy upon them, were very little inclined to preach the necessity of divine illumination. They feared the

opprobrious names of enthusiasts or hypocrites, and so became ashamed of the gospel of Christ.

In process of time, arose the sect of the Methodists; who, however they may be mistaken in some points, are certainly orthodox in their opinions of the divine agency on the human soul. They found it in the scriptures, in the liturgy, in the articles, and they preached it with a zeal which to many appeared intemperate, and certainly was sometimes too little guided by discretion. The consequence was, that the *spiritual doctrines*, already vilified by the court of Charles the Second, and by the adversaries of the Quakers, became objects of general dislike and derision.

In the meantime, the gospel of Jesus Christ suffered by its professed friends as well as declared enemies. Regular divines of great virtue, learning, and true piety feared to preach the Holy Ghost and its operations, the main doctrine of the gospel, lest they should countenance the Puritan, the Quaker, or the Methodist, and

lose the esteem of their own order, or of the higher powers. They often contented themselves, during a long life, with preaching morality only; which, without the Spirit of Christianity, is like a beautiful statue from the hand of a Bacon; however graceful its symmetry and polished its materials, yet wanting the breath of LIFE, it is still but a block of marble.

These prejudices remaining at this day, I have thought it right to recommend the sort of evidence which this book attempts to display, by citing the *authority* of great divines, who, uninfluenced by secular hopes or fears, have borne witness to the truth as it is in Jesus. They are among the most celebrated theologists of this nation; and such as few among living or recent writers will presume to vie with, in extent of knowledge, in power of expression, and zeal for Christianity.

Bitter is the anger of controversialists in divinity. Arrows dipt in venom are usually hurled at a writer, who ventures to recommend a doctrine which they disapprove.

I must

I must seek shelter under the shields of such men as Bishop Taylor, Doctor Isaac Barrow, and others, in and out of the establishment, who fought a good fight and KEPT THE FAITH, having no regard to worldly and sinister motives, but faithfully endeavouring to lead those, over whom they were appointed guides, by the radiance of gospel light, from the shadowy mazes of error into the pleasant paths of piety and peace.

Whatever *obloquy* may follow the teaching of such doctrine, I shall incur it with alacrity, because I believe it to be the truth, and that the happiness of human nature is highly concerned in its general reception. I will humbly say, therefore, with St. Paul, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ Jesus, for it is the POWER of God unto salvation *."

And as to those who deny the doctrine of divine influence, I fear they are guilty of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. I

* Rom. i. 16.

ſpeak diffidently, as it becomes every mortal on a ſubject ſo momentous; but let thoſe who are eager to deny and even deride the doctrine, conſider duly what is meant by the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, and let them remember this tremendous declaration of our Saviour himſelf, that **BLASPHEMY AGAINST THE HOLY GHOST SHALL NOT BE FORGIVEN***. All other ſins, we are expreſſly told, may be remitted, but on this the gates of mercy are cloſed. The denial of the Spirit's energy renders the goſpel of no effect, extinguishes the living light of Jeſus Chriſt, and involves wretched mortals in the darkneſs and death of Adam, fallen from the ſtate of primitive perfection. It is repreſented as the greateſt of all ſins, becauſe it is productive of the greateſt miſery.

* Matth. xii. 31.

SECTION IV.

The proper Evidence of the Christian Religion is the Illumination of the Holy Ghost, shining into the Hearts of those who do not close them against its Entrance. The Opinion of Dr. Gloucester Ridley cited.

NONE, says St. Paul, can say JESUS IS THE LORD, but by the HOLY GHOST*. If, then, St. Paul be allowed to have understood the Christian religion, it is certain, that mere *human testimony* will never convince the infidel, and produce that faith which constitutes the true Christian. Our theological libraries might be cleared of more than half their volumes, if men seeking the EVIDENCE of *Christianity*, would be satisfied with the declaration of St. Paul, and of the great Author of our religion.

* 1 Cor. xii. 3.

There

There is a faith very common in the world, which teaches to believe, as an historical fact, that a person of the name of Jesus, a very good man, did live on earth, and that he preached and taught, under the direction of God or divine Providence, an excellent system of morality; such as, if duly observed, would contribute to their happiness, and recommend them to divine favour. But this kind of faith is not the right faith; it believes not enough, it is not given by the *Holy Ghost*; for he, in whom God dwelleth, confesseth that Jesus is the Son of God, and the SAVIOUR of the world*; but they who acknowledge Jesus only as a good man teaching morality, know him not as a SAVIOUR. Socrates taught fine morality; and so did Seneca, Epictetus, and many more; but they had not and could not teach the knowledge which leadeth to salvation.

“Illuminating grace,” says Dr. Gloucester Ridley, “consists not in the assent

* 1 John, iv. 13, 14, 15.

“we

“ we give to the HISTORY of the gospel,
 “ as a narration of matters of fact, suffi-
 “ ciently supported by HUMAN EVIDENCE;
 “ for this may be purely the effect of our
 “ study and learning. The collating of
 “ copies, the consulting of history, the
 “ comparing the assertions of friends, and
 “ the concessions of enemies, may NECES-
 “ SITATE * such a belief, a faith which
 “ the devils may have, and doubtless have
 “ it. This sort of faith is an *acquisition* of
 “ our own, and not a GIFT.” But FAITH
 IS THE GIFT OF GOD.

“ There may be a faith,” continues
 Dr. Ridley, “ which is not the work of
 “ the Spirit in our hearts, but entirely the
 “ effect of human means, our natural fa-
 “ culties assisted by languages, antiquities,
 “ manuscripts, criticism, and the like,

* Πίστις οὐκ ἡ γινώσκουσα ἀσθενείας, ἀλλ’ ἡ ταῖς τοῦ
 πνεύματος ἐνεργείαις ἐγνωμένη. BASIL in *Psal.* 195.—The
 right faith is not that which is FORCED by mathe-
 matical demonstration, whether we *will* or not; but
 that which grows in the mind from the operation or
 energies of the SPIRIT.

“ without

“ without any *divine aid*, except the *bare*
 “ *letter of the revelation*; and as this faith
 “ may rise out of human abilities, so may
 “ it be attended with pride in our sup-
 “ posed accomplishments, *envy* of others
 “ superior skill, and bitter *strife* against
 “ those who mistake or oppose such
 “ truths; and is therefore no manifesta-
 “ tion of that Spirit which resisteth the
 “ *proud*, and dispenses its graces only to
 “ the *humble*. THIS WISDOM DESCEND-
 “ ETH NOT FROM ABOVE. But the *true*
 “ *saving* faith, at the same time that it
 “ informs the understanding, influences
 “ the WILL AND AFFECTIONS; it en-
 “ lightens the eyes of the heart*, says the
 “ apostle: it is *there*, in the HEART, that
 “ the Christian man believeth; and if
 “ *thou believest with thine* HEART, *thou*
 “ *shalt be saved* †; while infidelity pro-

* Περαισιμαίνουσιν τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς τῇ καρδίᾳ. *Ephesians*,
 i. 18.—Enlightening the eyes of the HEART. Al-
 most all the old MSS. read καρδίᾳ, and not διανοίᾳ,
 as it stands in our printed copies.

See Mill's *Lectiones Variantes*.

RIDLEY.

† Rom. x. 9.

“ ceedeth

"ceedeth from an averſeneſs of our affections,—from an evil heart of unbelief*."

Is it not therefore ſtrange, that learned apologiſts, well acquainted with ſcripture, ſhould, after reading theſe ſtrong declarations, that the HEART muſt be impreſſed before faith can be fixed in it, ſhould ſtudiouſly avoid every topic which addreſſes itſelf to the *affections*, and coldly apply themſelves to the underſtanding, in a language and manner which might become a mathematical lecturer ſolving a problem of Euclid.

Infidelity is increaſing, and will continue to increaſe, ſo long as divines decline the means of converſion and perſuaſion which the ſcriptures of the New Teſtament declare to be the only *effectual* means; ſo long as they have recourſe to human reaſon and human learning ONLY, in which they will always find opponents very powerful. The Lord opened the heart of Lydia †, and then ſhe attended to

* Heb. iii. 12.

† Acts, xvi. 14.

the things which were spoken of Paul. The Lord opens the HEARTS of all men at some period of their lives ; but the vanity of the world, the cares of gain, the pride of life, *shut* them again, and reject the Holy Ghost. It is the business of divines to dispose those who are thus unfortunate and unwise, to be ready to receive the divine guest, should he again knock at the door of their hearts ; but in doing this, they must preach the true *gospel*, which is not a system of mere human morality or philosophy, but the doctrine of grace *.

* It must be taught *mediatè per verbum*, IMMEDIATE *per SPIRITUM*,

SECTION V.

*The true and only convincing Evidence
of the Religion of Christ, or the Illu-
mination of the Holy Ghost is offered to
ALL.*

FROM the eternal Fountain of light, both natural and spiritual, there streams a light which lighteth every one that cometh into the world. Whoever loves that which is good and just and true, and desires to act a virtuous part in his place allotted to him in this world, whether high or low, may be assured of the *blessing* of heaven, displaying itself not perhaps in worldly riches or honours, but in something infinitely more valuable,—a SECRET INFLUENCE upon his heart and understanding, to direct his conduct, to improve his nature, and to lead him, though in the lowly vale, yet along the path of peace.

The

The nature of all men was depraved by the fall of Adam. The assistance of God's Holy Spirit was withdrawn. Christ came to restore that nature, and to bring down that assistance, and leave it as a GIFT, a legacy to all mankind after his departure.

In *Adam* ALL die, says St. Paul, but in Christ shall *all* be made alive. That is, in Adam *all* die a spiritual death, or lose the *Paraclete*, the particle of the divine nature, which was bestowed on man on his creation; and in Christ all are made alive, spiritually alive, or rendered capable, if they do not voluntarily choose darkness rather than light, of the divine illumination of the Holy Ghost. The *film* is taken from the eyes of all, but the eye-lids remain, which may be closed by voluntary connivance, or by wicked presumption.

“ I will pour out my SPIRIT upon all
“ flesh *.”

“ The grace which bringeth salvation
“ hath appeared unto ALL men.”—“ This

• Joel, ii. 28.

“ is

“ is the light which lighteth every man
 “ that cometh into the world.”—“ It is
 “ his will, that all men should be saved,
 “ and come to the knowledge of the
 “ truth.”—“ Christ came to save sinners;
 “ and we have before proved, both Jews
 “ and Gentiles, that they are ALL under
 “ sin.”—“ Come unto me ALL ye that
 “ labour and are heavy laden.”—“ He
 “ has propitiated for the sins of the WHOLE
 “ world. His grace has been openly of-
 “ fered to ALL men in the gospel *.”

These passages, which no sophistry can elude, are sufficient to prove that the internal EVIDENCE of the gospel has a great advantage over the external, in the circumstance of its universality. All may be convinced by it who are willing †. But can this be said of dry, logical, systematic testimonies, which require learning, saga-

* 1 Tim. ii. 4. 1 Tim. i. 15. Rom. iii. 9. Matth. ii. 28. 1 John, ii. 2. Tit. ii. 2.

† Η μὲν γὰρ χάρις ὡς ΠΑΝΤΑΣ ἐκκλίνει. CHRYSOSTOM in Joan. Hom.—For grace indeed is poured out upon ALL.

city,

city, and *time*, to be comprehended? Such testimonies are fit for *few*, and appear unlikely to produce vital religion in any. They serve men to *talk* about, they furnish matter for logomachy; but they leave the heart unaffected. Neither Jesus Christ nor his apostles thought proper to address men *systematically*. And are critics, linguists, and logicians wiser than the Author of their religion, and better informed than his apostles?

The word of God is like a *two-edged sword*, invincible where it is properly used; but the word of man is comparatively a feeble weapon, without point or edge. The word of man alone, though adorned with all eloquence, learning, and logical subtilty, will never stop the progress of unbelief. The word of God, rightly explained, so as to administer grace to the hearers and readers, will still preserve and extend Christianity, as it has hitherto done, notwithstanding all the opposition of the world, and those unfeeling children of it,

whose hearts are hardened and understandings darkened by the pride of life. If, therefore, as St. James advises, any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that *giveth* TO ALL men *liberally*, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him. The wisdom here meant is that which maketh *wise* unto salvation; and certainly is not to be found in the cold didactic writings of those who rely entirely on their own reason, and deny or explain away the doctrine of grace.

Grace is the living gospel. Perishable paper, pens, ink, and printer's types, can never supersede the daily, hourly operation of the omniscient and omnipotent Creator and Preserver of the universe.

Let us remember, "that to EVERY MAN
" is given the manifestation of the Spirit
" to profit withal." 1 Cor. xii. 7.

Mr. Payne, in his attack on Christianity, sums up all his objections at the close. The first and greatest is this, and I give it in his own words, though it is contrary to my practice, and opinion of propriety, often
to

to cite the cavils of unbelievers: "The idea
" or belief of a word of God existing in
" PRINT, OR IN WRITING, OR IN SPEECH,
" is inconsistent with itself, for reasons al-
" ready assigned. These reasons, among
" many others, are the want of an uni-
" versal language; the mutability of lan-
" guage; the errors to which translations
" are subject; the possibility of totally
" suppressing such a word; the probabi-
" lity of altering it, or of fabricating
" the whole, and imposing it upon the
" world."

Now these objections cannot possibly be made to the *evidence* of the Spirit of God, the *manifestation of the Spirit given to every man*; because the Spirit speaks an *universal language*, addressing itself to the feelings of the heart, which are the same, whatever sounds are uttered by the tongue; because its language is not subject to the *mutability* of human dialects; because it is far removed from the possibility of misrepresentation by translators; because it cannot be totally suppressed; because it can-

not be altered; because it cannot be *fabricated* or imposed on the world; because it is an EMANATION from the God of truth, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. This evidence sheds its light all over the Christian world, and is seen, like the sun in the heavens, by all who use their visual powers, unobstructed by self-raised clouds of passion, prejudice, vice, and false philosophy.

SECTION VI.

Opinions of Bishop Taylor respecting the Evidence of the Holy Spirit; "shewing" (as he expresses it) "how the Scholars of the University shall become most LEARNED and most USEFUL."

"**W**E have examined all ways, in our
 " inquiries after religious truth, but
 " one; all but GOD'S WAY *. Let us, hav-
 " ing missed in all the other, try this.
 " Let us go to God for truth; for truth
 " comes from God only. If we miss the
 " truth, it is because we will not find it;
 " for certain it is, that all the truth which
 " God hath made NECESSARY, he hath
 " also made legible and plain; and if we
 " will open our eyes we shall see the sun,
 " and if we will walk in the light, we shall
 " rejoice in the light. Only let us with-
 " draw the curtains, let us remove the
 " impediments, and the sin that doth so

* See Bishop Taylor's *VIA Intelligentiæ*.

" easily beset us. That is GOD'S WAY.
 " Every man must, in his station, do that
 " portion of duty which God requires of
 " him; and then he shall BE TAUGHT OF
 " GOD all that is fit for him to learn;
 " there is no other way for him but this.
 " The fear of the Lord is the beginning
 " of wisdom; and a good understanding
 " have all they that do thereafter. And
 " so said David of himself: *I have more*
 " *understanding than my teachers; because*
 " *I keep thy commandments.* And this is
 " the only way which Christ has taught
 " us. If you ask, what is truth? you must
 " not do as Pilate did, ask the question,
 " and then go away from him that only can
 " give you an answer; for as God is the
 " Author of truth, so he is the TEACHER
 " of it, and the way to learn is this; for
 " so saith our blessed Lord; If any man
 " will do his will, he shall know of the
 " doctrine whether it be of God or no.

" This text is simple as truth itself, but
 " greatly comprehensive, and contains a
 " truth that alone will enable you to un-
 " derstand

“ derstand all mysteries, and to expound
 “ all prophecies, and to interpret all
 “ scriptures, and to search into all secrets,
 “ all, I mean, which concern our happi-
 “ nefs and our duty. It is plainly to be
 “ resolved into this proposition :

“ THE WAY TO JUDGE OF RELIGION
 “ IS BY DOING OUR DUTY; AND THEO-
 “ LOGY IS RATHER A DIVINE LIFE THAN
 “ A DIVINE KNOWLEDGE.

“ In heaven indeed we shall first see
 “ and then love; but here on earth we
 “ must first love, and love will open our
 “ eyes as well as our hearts, and we shall
 “ then see and perceive and understand.

“ Every man understands more of re-
 “ ligion by his affections than by his rea-
 “ son. It is not the wit of the man, but
 “ the spirit of the man; not so much his
 “ head as his heart that learns the DIVINE
 “ PHILOSOPHY.

“ There is in every righteous man a
 “ NEW VITAL PRINCIPLE. The spirit of
 “ grace is the spirit of wisdom, and teaches
 “ us by secret inspirations, by proper ar-
 “ guments,

“ guments, by actual persuasions, by per-
 “ sonal applications, by effects and ener-
 “ gies; and as the soul of man is the cause
 “ of all his vital operations, so is the Spi-
 “ rit of God the life of that life, and the
 “ cause of all actions and productions
 “ spiritual; and the consequence of this
 “ is what St. John tells us of; *Ye have*
 “ *received the UNCTION from above, and*
 “ *that anointing teacheth you all things,—*
 “ all things of some one kind; that is,
 “ certainly all things that pertain to life
 “ and godliness; all that by which a man
 “ is *wise and happy*. Unless the soul have
 “ a new life put into it, unless there be a
 “ vital principle within, unless the Spirit
 “ of life be the informer of the spirit of
 “ the man, the word of God will be as
 “ DEAD in the operation as the body in
 “ its powers and possibilities.

“ God’s Spirit does not destroy reason,
 “ but heightens it. God opens the heart
 “ and creates a new one, and without this
 “ creation, this new principle of life, we
 “ may hear the word of God, but we can

“ never

“ *never understand it* ; we hear the sound,
“ but are never the better. Unless there
“ be in our hearts a secret conviction by
“ the Spirit of God, the GOSPEL ITSELF,
“ IS A DEAD LETTER.

“ Do we not see this by daily experience? Even those things which a
“ good man and an evil man know, they
“ do not know both alike. An evil man
“ *knows* that God is lovely, and that sin is
“ of an evil and destructive nature, and
“ when he is reprov'd he is *convinced* ;
“ and when he is observed, he is ashamed ;
“ and when he has done, he is unsatisfied ;
“ and when he pursues his sin, he does it
“ in the dark. Tell him he shall die, and
“ he sighs deeply, but he *knows* it as well
“ as you. Proceed, and say that after
“ death comes judgment, and the poor
“ man believes and trembles ; and yet,
“ after all this, he runs to commit his sin
“ with as certain an event and resolution as
“ if he *knew* no argument against it.

“ Now since, at the same time, we see
“ other persons, not so LEARNED, it may

“ be, not so much versed in the *scriptures*;
“ yet they say a thing is good and lay hold
“ of it. They believe glorious things of
“ heaven, and they live accordingly, as
“ men that believe themselves. What is
“ the reason of this *difference*? They
“ both read the *scriptures*; they read and
“ hear the same sermons; they have ca-
“ pable understandings; they both believe
“ what they hear and what they read; and
“ yet the *event* is *vastly different*. The
“ reason is that which I am now speak-
“ ing of: the one understands by one
“ principle, the other by another; the
“ one understands by NATURE, the other
“ by GRACE; the one by human learn-
“ ing, the other by DIVINE; the one
“ reads the *scriptures* without, and the
“ other within; the one understands as a
“ son of man, the other as a son of God;
“ the one perceives by the proportions of
“ the world, the other by the measures of
“ the Spirit; the one understands by REA-
“ son, the other by LOVE; and therefore
“ he does not only understand the ser-
“ mons

" mons of the Spirit and perceive their
 " MEANING, but he pierces deeper, and
 " knows the meaning of that meaning;
 " that is, the SECRET OF THE SPIRIT, that
 " which is spiritually discerned, that which
 " gives life to the proposition and activity
 " to the soul. And the reason is, that he
 " hath a divine principle within him and a
 " new understanding; that is plainly, he
 " hath LOVE, and that is more than KNOW-
 " LEDGE, as was rarely well observed by
 " St. Paul. Knowledge puffeth up; but
 " charity * edifieth; that is, charity mak-
 " eth the best scholars. No sermons can
 " build you up a holy building to God,
 " unless the love of God be in your hearts,
 " and purify your souls from all filthiness
 " of the flesh and spirit.

" A good life is the best way to under-
 " stand wisdom and religion, because, by
 " the *experiences* and relishes of religion,
 " there is conveyed to them a sweetness to
 " which all wicked men are strangers.
 " There is in the things of God, to those

* *Aqazn*—Love of God.

“ who practise them, a deliciousness that
 “ makes us love them, and that love ad-
 “ mits us into God’s cabinet, and *strangely*
 “ *clarifies the understanding by the purifi-*
 “ *cation of the heart.* For when our rea-
 “ son is raised up by the Spirit of Christ,
 “ it is turned quickly into EXPERIENCE;
 “ when our faith relies upon the principles
 “ of Christ, it is changed into *vision*; and
 “ so long as we know God only in the
 “ ways of men, by *contentious* learning,
 “ by ARGUING and dispute, we see no-
 “ thing but the shadow of him, and in
 “ that shadow we meet with many dark
 “ appearances, little certainty, and much
 “ conjecture; but when we know him
 “ λογω αποφαντικω, γαληνη νοερᾷ, with the
 “ eyes of holiness and the instruction of
 “ *gracious* experiences, with a quiet spirit
 “ and the peace of enjoyment, *then* we
 “ shall hear what we never heard, and see
 “ what our eyes never saw; *then* the my-
 “ steries of Godliness shall be open unto
 “ us, and clear as the windows of the
 “ morning; and this is rarely well ex-
 “ pressed by the apostle. “ If we stand up
 “ from

“ from the dead and awake from sleep,
“ then Christ shall give us LIGHT.”

“ For though the scriptures themselves
“ are written by the Spirit of God, yet
“ they are written within and without;
“ and besides the light that shines upon
“ the face of them, *unless there be a light*
“ *shining within our hearts*, unfolding the
“ leaves, and interpreting the mysterious
“ sense of the Spirit, convincing our con-
“ sciences and preaching to our hearts; to
“ look for Christ in the leaves of the gos-
“ pel, is to look for the living among the
“ dead. There is a life in them; but that
“ life is, according to St. Paul’s expres-
“ sion, hid with Christ in God, and un-
“ less the Spirit of God draw it forth, *we*
“ shall not be able.

“ Human learning brings excellent mi-
“ nisteries towards this; it is admirably use-
“ ful for the reproof of heresies, for the
“ detection of fallacies, for the letter of
“ the scriptures, for *collateral testimonies*,
“ for exterior advantages; but there is
“ something beyond this, that human
“ learn-

“ learning without the addition of *divine*
 “ can never reach.

“ A good man, though unlearned in
 “ *secular* knowledge, is like the windows
 “ of the temple, narrow without and
 “ broad within; he sees not so much of
 “ what profits not *abroad*, but whatsoever
 “ is *within*, and concerns religion and the
 “ glorifications of God, that he sees with
 “ a broad inspection; but all human learn-
 “ ing without God is but blindness and
 “ folly. One man discourses of the sa-
 “ crament, another *receives* Christ; one
 “ discourses for or against transubstantia-
 “ tion; but the good man feels himself
 “ to be changed, and so joined to Christ,
 “ that he only understands the true sense
 “ of transubstantiation, while he becomes
 “ to Christ bone of his bone, flesh of his
 “ flesh, and of the same spirit with his
 “ Lord.

“ From holiness we have the best in-
 “ struction. For that which we are taught
 “ by the Holy Spirit of God, this new
 “ nature, this vital principle within us,

“ it is that which is worth our learning ?
“ not vain and empty, idle and insignifi-
“ cant notions, in which, when you have
“ laboured till your eyes are fixed in their
“ orbs, and your flesh unfixed from its
“ bones, you are *no better and no wiser*.
“ If the Spirit of God be your teacher, he
“ will teach you such truths as will make
“ you know and love God, and become
“ like to him, and enjoy him for ever, by
“ passing from *similitude to union* and eter-
“ nal fruition.

“ Too many scholars have lived upon
“ air and empty notions for many ages
“ past, and troubled themselves with ty-
“ ing and untying knots, like hypochon-
“ driacs in a fit of melancholy, thinking
“ of nothings, and troubling themselves
“ with nothings, and falling out about no-
“ things, and being very wise and very
“ learned in things that are not, and work
“ not, and were never planted in Paradise by
“ the finger of God. If the Spirit of God
“ be our teacher, we shall learn to avoid evil
“ and to do good, to be wise and to be
“ holy,

“ holy, to be profitable and careful; and
 “ they that walk in this way shall find
 “ more peace in their consciences, MORE
 “ SKILL IN THE SCRIPTURES, more satis-
 “ faction in their doubts, than can be ob-
 “ tained by all the polemical and imper-
 “ tinent disputations of the world. The
 “ man that is wise, he that is conducted
 “ by the Spirit of God, knows better in
 “ what Christ’s kingdom doth consist than
 “ to throw away his time and interest, his
 “ peace and safety, for what? for reli-
 “ gion? no: for the body of religion?
 “ not so much: for the garment of the
 “ body of religion? no, not for so much;
 “ but for the *fringes* of the garment of
 “ the body of religion; for such, and no
 “ better, are many religious disputes;
 “ things, or rather circumstances and
 “ manners of things, in which the soul
 “ and spirit are not at all concerned. The
 “ *knowledge* which comes from godliness
 “ is *θειότερον τι πάσης ἀποδείξεως*, something
 “ more certain and divine than all demon-
 “ stration and human learning.

“ And

“ And now to conclude :—to you I
“ speak, fathers and brethren, you who
“ are or intend to be of the clergy ; you
“ see here the best compendium of your
“ studies, the best alleviation of your la-
“ bours, the truest method of wisdom.
“ It is not by reading multitudes of books,
“ but by studying the truth of God ; it is
“ not by laborious commentaries of the
“ doctors that you can finish your work,
“ but the exposition of the Spirit of God ;
“ it is not by the rules of metaphysics,
“ but by the proportions of holiness ; and
“ when all books are read, and all argu-
“ ments examined, and all authorities al-
“ leged, nothing can be found to be true
“ that is unholy. The learning of the fa-
“ thers was more owing to their piety
“ than their skill, more to God than to
“ themselves. These were the men that
“ prevailed against error, because they
“ lived according to truth. If ye walk in
“ light, and live in the spirit, your doc-
“ trines will be true, and that truth will
“ prevail.

“ I pray

" I pray God to give you all grace to
 " follow this wisdom, to study this learn-
 " ing, to labour for the understanding of
 " godliness; so your time and your stu-
 " dies, your persons and your labours,
 " will be holy and useful, sanctified and
 " blessed, beneficial to men and pleasing
 " to God, through him who is the wis-
 " dom of the Father, who is made to all
 " that love him, wisdom, and righteouf-
 " ness, and sanctification, and redemp-
 " tion."

Will any one among our living theolo-
 gists controvert the merits of Bishop Tay-
 lor? Is there one whom the public judg-
 ment will place on an equality with him?
 Will any one stigmatize him as an ignorant
 enthusiast? His strength of understanding
 and powers of reasoning are strikingly ex-
 hibited in his *Ductor dubitantium*, in his *Li-
 berty of prophesying*, and in his polemical
 writings. I must conclude, that he un-
 derstood the Christian religion better than
 most of the sons of men; because, to abi-
 lities of the very first rank, he united in
 himself

himself the finest feelings of devotion. His authority must have weight with all serious and humble inquirers into the subject of Christianity, and his authority strongly and repeatedly inculcates the opinion which I wish to maintain, that the best evidence of the truth of our religion is derived from the operation of the Holy Spirit on every heart which is disposed to receive it.

And I wish it to be duly attended to, that the discourse from which the above extracts are made, was not addressed to a popular assembly, but to the clergy of an university, and at a solemn visitation. The Bishop evidently wished, that the doctrines which he taught might be disseminated among the people by the parochial clergy. They were disseminated; and in consequence of it, Christianity flourished. They must be again disseminated by the Bishops and all parochial clergy, if they sincerely wish to check the progress of infidelity. The minds of men must be impressed with the sense of an influential DIVINITY in the Christian religion, or they will reject it for the morality

ality of Socrates, Seneca, the modern philosophers, and all those plausible reasoners, to whom this world and the *things which are seen* are the chief objects of attention. The *old divines* taught and preached with wonderful efficacy, because they spoke as men having authority from the Holy Ghost, and not as the disputers of this world, proud of a little science, acquired from *heathen* writers in the cloisters of an academy. There was a celestial glory diffused round the pulpits of the old divines; and the hearers, struck with veneration, listened to the preacher as to an undoubted oracle. Full of *grace* were his lips; and *moral TRUTH* was beautifully illuminated by *divine*. She easily won and firmly fixed the affections of men, clothed, as she was, with light as with a garment.

SECTION VII.

Passages from the celebrated Mr. John Smith, Fellow of Queen's College, Cambridge, corroborative of the Opinion that the best Evidence of the Christian Religion arises from the Energy of the Holy Spirit.*

“ DIVINE truth is not to be discerned
 “ so much in a man's brain as in his
 “ heart. There is a divine and spiritual
 “ sense which alone is able to converse in-
 “ ternally with the life and soul of divine
 “ truth, as mixing and uniting itself with
 “ it; while vulgar minds behold only the
 “ body and outside of it. Though in it-
 “ self it be most intelligible, and such as
 “ the human mind may most easily appre-
 “ hend, yet there is an INCRUSTATION,
 “ as the Hebrew † writers call it, upon
 “ all corrupt minds, which hinders the
 “ lively taste and relish of it.

* See his Select Discourses.

† *Incrustamentum immunditiei*—An incrustation of filth.

“ The

“ The best acquaintance with religion
“ is a KNOWLEDGE TAUGHT OF GOD *: it
“ is a light which descends from heaven,
“ which alone is able to guide and con-
“ duct the souls of men to that heaven
“ whence it comes. The Christian reli-
“ gion is an influx from God upon the
“ minds of good men; and the great de-
“ sign of the gospel is to unite human na-
“ ture to divinity.

“ The gospel is a mighty efflux and
“ emanation of life and spirit, freely issuing
“ forth from an omnipotent source of
“ grace and love; that godlike, vital
“ influence, by which the Divinity derives
“ itself into the souls of men, enlivening
“ and transforming them into its own
“ likeness, and strongly imprinting upon
“ them a copy of its own beauty and
“ goodness: like the spiritual virtue of
“ the heavens, which spreads itself freely
“ upon the lower world, and subtly
“ insinuating itself into this benumbed,

“ feeble,

“ feeble, earthly matter, begets life and
 “ motion in it; briefly, it is that whereby
 “ God comes to dwell in us, and we in
 “ him.

“ The apostle calls the law the mini-
 “ stration of the letter and of death, it be-
 “ ing in itself but a dead letter, as all that
 “ which is without a man's soul must be;
 “ but on the other side, he calls the gos-
 “ pel, because of the intrinsical and vital
 “ administration of it in living impres-
 “ sions upon the souls of men, the *mini-*
 “ *stration of the spirit*, and the *ministra-*
 “ *tion of righteousness*; by which he cannot
 “ mean the HISTORY of the gospel, or
 “ those CREDENDA propounded to us to
 “ believe; for this would make the gospel
 “ itself as much an external thing as the
 “ law was; and so we see that the preach-
 “ ing of Christ crucified was to the Jews
 “ a *stumbling block*, and to the *Greeks fool-*
 “ *ishness*. But indeed he means a VITAL
 “ EFFLUX from God upon the souls of
 “ men, whereby they are made partakers
 “ of life and strength from him.

“ Though

“ Though the *history* and outward com-
 “ munication of the gospel to us *in scriptis*
 “ is to be always acknowledged as a spe-
 “ cial mercy and advantage, and certainly
 “ no less privilege to the Christians than it
 “ was to the Jews, to be the depositaries
 “ of the oracles of God, yet it is plain that
 “ the apostle, where he compares the law
 “ and the gospel, means something which
 “ is more than a piece of book-learning,
 “ or an historical narration of the free
 “ love of God, in the several contrivances
 “ of it for the redemption of mankind.

“ The evangelical or new law is an
 “ efflux of life and power from God him-
 “ self, the original of life and power, and
 “ produceth life wherever it comes;
 “ and to this double dispensation of law
 “ and gospel does St. Paul clearly refer
 “ 2 Cor. iii. 3. You are the epistle of
 “ Christ ministered by us, WRITTEN NOT
 “ WITH INK, but with THE SPIRIT OF
 “ THE LIVING GOD.—*Not in tables of*
 “ *stone*; which last words are a plain gloss
 “ upon that mundane kind of administer-

“ ing the law, in a mere external way, to
“ which he opposeth the GOSPEL.

“ The gospel is not so much a *system*
“ and body of saving divinity, as the
“ spirit and vital influence of it spreading
“ itself over all the powers of men’s souls,
“ and quickening them into a DIVINE
“ LIFE; it is not so properly a doctrine
“ that is wrapt up in ink and paper, as it is
“ VITALIS SCIENTIA, a living impression
“ made upon the soul and spirit. The
“ gospel does not so much consist *in ver-*
“ *bis* as *in virtute*;—in the written word,
“ as in an internal energy.”

He who wishes to have an adequate
idea of this profound scholar and most ex-
cellent man, will find a pleasing account of
him in Bishop Patrick’s sermon at his
funeral, subjoined to the SELECT DIS-
COURSES, which abound with beautiful
passages, illustrative of the true Christian
philosophy.

SECTION VIII.

Dr. Isaac Barrow's Opinion of the Evidence of Christianity, afforded by the illuminating Operation of the Holy Spirit; and on the Holy Spirit in general.

“OUR reason is shut up, and barred
 “ with various appetites, humours,
 “ and passions against gospel truths; nor
 “ can we admit them into our hearts, ex-
 “ cept God, by his spirit, do *set open our*
 “ *mind*, and work a free passage for them
 “ into us. It is he who commanded the
 “ light to shine out of darkness, that
 “ must, as St. Paul speaketh, *illustrate*
 “ *our hearts with the knowledge of these*
 “ *things*. AN UNCTION from the Holy
 “ one, clearing our eyes, softening our
 “ hearts, healing our distempered fa-
 “ culties, must, as St. John informeth
 “ us, TEACH and persuade us this sort
 “ of truths. A hearty belief of these
 “ *seemingly*

“ seemingly incredible propositions must
 “ indeed be, as St. Paul calleth it, the
 “ GIFT of God, proceeding from that
 “ Spirit of faith whereof the same apostle
 “ speaketh; such faith is not, as St. Basil
 “ faith, engendered by geometrical *necef-*
 “ *sities*, but by the effectual operations of
 “ the Holy Ghost. Flesh and blood will
 “ not reveal to us, nor can any man with
 “ clear confidence say that Jesus is the
 “ Lord (the MESSIAS, the infallible Pro-
 “ phet, the universal Lawgiver, the Son
 “ of the living God) but by the *Holy*
 “ *Ghost*. Every spirit which *sincerely* con-
 “ fesseth him to be the Christ, we may,
 “ with St. John, safely conclude to be of
 “ God; for of ourselves we are not suffi-
 “ cient, as the apostle says, λογίζεσθαι τι,
 “ to reason out or collect any of these
 “ things. We NEVER, of our own ac-
 “ cord, without DIVINE ATTRACTION,
 “ *should come unto Christ*; that is, should
 “ effectually consent unto and embrace his
 “ institution, consisting of such *unplausible*
 “ propositions and precepts. Hardly

“ would his own disciples, who had so
 “ long enjoyed the light of his conversa-
 “ tion and instruction, admitted it, if he
 “ had not granted them that *Spirit of*
 “ *truth*, whose work it was *οδηγειν*, to
 “ lead them in this unknown and uncouth
 “ way; *αναγγελειν* to tell them again and
 “ again, that is, to instill and inculcate
 “ these crabbed truths upon them; *υπο-*
 “ *μνησκειν*, to admonish, excite, and
 “ urge them to the marking and minding
 “ them: hardly, I say, without the guid-
 “ ance of this Spirit, would our Lord’s
 “ disciples have admitted divers *evange-*
 “ *lical* truths, as our Lord himself told
 “ them. I have, said he, many things be-
 “ side to say to you, but ye cannot as yet
 “ bear them; but when he, the Spirit of
 “ truth, shall come, he shall CONDUCT
 “ YOU INTO ALL TRUTH.

“ As for the mighty sages of the world,
 “ the learned scribes, the subtle disputers,
 “ the deep politicians, the wise men ac-
 “ cording to the flesh, the men of most
 “ refined judgment and *improved* REASON

“ IN

“ in the world’s eye, they were more
 “ ready to deride than to regard, to im-
 “ pugn than to admit these doctrines; to
 “ the Greeks, who sought wisdom, the
 “ preaching of them seemed foolishness.

“ It is true, some few sparks or flashes
 “ of this divine knowledge may possibly
 “ be driven out by *rational* consideration.
 “ Philosophy may yield some twilight
 “ glimmerings thereof. Common reason
 “ may dictate a faint consent unto, may
 “ produce a *cold tendency* after some of
 “ these things; but a *clear perception*, and
 “ a resolute persuasion of mind, that full
 “ assurance of faith and inflexible confes-
 “ sion of hope *ομολογια της ελπιδος ακλινης*,
 “ which the apostle to the Hebrews
 “ speaks of, that full assurance of un-
 “ derstanding, that abundant knowledge
 “ of the divine will in all spiritual wisdom
 “ and understanding, with which St. Paul
 “ did pray that his Colossians might be
 “ replenished; these so perfect illustra-
 “ tions of the mind, so powerful convic-
 “ tions of the heart, do argue *immediate*
 “ influences

“ influences from the Fountain of life and
 “ wisdom, the DIVINE SPIRIT. No ex-
 “ ternal instruction could infuse, no in-
 “ terior discourse could excite them;
 “ could penetrate these opacities of ig-
 “ norance, and dissipate these thick mists
 “ of prejudice, wherein nature and custom
 “ do involve us; could so thoroughly
 “ awaken the lethargic stupidity of our
 “ souls; could supple the refractory stiff-
 “ ness of our wills; could mollify the
 “ stony hardness of our hearts; could
 “ void our natural aversion to such
 “ things, and quell that *φρονημα σαρκος*,
 “ that carnal mind, which, St. Paul says,
 “ is enmity against God, for it is not sub-
 “ ject to the law of God, neither indeed
 “ can be; could depress those *υψηματα*,
 “ those lofty towers of self-conceit, reared
 “ against the knowledge of God, and
 “ demolish those *οχυρωματα*, those bul-
 “ warks of self-will and perverse stomach
 “ opposed against the impressions of di-
 “ vine faith, and captivate *παν νοημα*,
 “ every conceit and device of ours to the
 “ obedience

“ obedience of Christ and his discipline.
“ Well, therefore, did St. Paul pray in
“ behalf of his Ephesians, that God would
“ bestow on them the Spirit of wisdom
“ and revelation in the acknowledgment
“ of him, and that the eyes of their mind
“ might be enlightened, so as to know the
“ hope of their calling; that is, to under-
“ stand and believe the doctrines of
“ Christianity.****

“ We proceed now to the peculiar of-
* fices, functions, and operations of the
“ Holy Spirit: Many such there are in
“ an especial manner attributed or appro-
“ priated to him; which, as they respect
“ God, seem reducible to two general
“ ones: the declaration of God’s mind,
“ and the execution of his will; as they
“ are referred to man, (for in regard to
“ other beings, the scripture doth not so
“ much consider what he performs, it not
“ concerning us to know it,) are espe-
“ cially the producing in us all actions
“ requisite or conducive to our eternal
“ happiness and salvation; to which may

“ be added, the intercession between God
“ and man, which jointly respecteth
“ both.

“ First, it is his especial work to dis-
“ close God’s mind to us ; whence he is
“ styled the *Spirit of truth, the Spirit of*
“ *prophecy, the Spirit of revelation* ; for
“ that all supernatural light and wisdom
“ have ever proceeded from him. He
“ instructed *all the prophets that have been*
“ *since the world began, to know*, he ena-
“ bled them to *speak*, the mind of God
“ concerning things present and future.
“ Holy men (that have taught men their
“ duty, and lead them in the way to bliss)
“ were but his instruments, *speaking as*
“ *they were moved by the Holy Ghost*.

“ By his inspiration the holy scriptures
“ (the most full and certain witness of
“ God’s mind, the law and testimony by
“ which our life is to be directed and re-
“ gulated) were conceived. *He guided*
“ *the apostles into all truth*, and by them
“ instructed the world in the knowledge
“ of God’s gracious intentions towards
“ mankind,

“ mankind, and in all the holy mysteria
 “ of the gospel: *That which in other ages*
 “ *was not made known unto the sons of*
 “ *men, as it is now revealed unto his holy*
 “ *apostles and prophets by the Spirit. Eye*
 “ *hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither*
 “ *have entered into the heart of man, the*
 “ *things which God hath prepared for*
 “ *them that love him; but God hath re-*
 “ *vealed them to us by his Spirit, saith*
 “ St. Paul. All the KNOWLEDGE we can
 “ pretend to in these things doth proceed
 “ merely from his revelation, doth wholly
 “ rely upon his authority.

“ To him it especially belongs to exe-
 “ cute the will of God, in matters tran-
 “ scending the ordinary power and course
 “ of nature. Whence he is called the
 “ *power of the Most High*, (that is, the
 “ substantial power and virtue of God,)
 “ the *finger of God* (as by comparing the
 “ expression of St. Luke and St. Matthew
 “ may appear); and whatever eminent
 “ God hath designed, he is said to have
 “ performed by him; by him he framed.

“ the world, and (as Job speaketh) *gar-*
“ *nished the heavens*. By him he govern-
“ eth the world, so that all extraordinary
“ works of Providence, (when God, be-
“ side the common law and usual course of
“ nature, doth interpose to do any thing,)
“ all miraculous performances are attri-
“ buted to his energy. By him our Sa-
“ viour, by him the apostles, by him the
“ prophets, are expressly said to perform
“ their wonderful works; but especially
“ by him God manages that great work,
“ so earnestly designed by him, of our sal-
“ vation; working in us all good disposi-
“ tions, capacifying us for salvation, di-
“ recting and assisting us in all our actions
“ tending thereto.

“ We naturally are void of those good
“ dispositions in understanding, will, and
“ affections which are needful to render
“ us acceptable unto God, fit to serve
“ and please him, capable of any favour
“ from him, of any true happiness in our-
“ selves. Our minds naturally are blind,
“ ignorant, stupid, giddy, and prone to
“ error,

“ error, especially in things supernatural
“ and spiritual, and abstracted from or-
“ dinary sense. Our wills are froward and
“ stubborn, light and unstable, inclining
“ to evil, and averse from what is truly
“ good; our affections are very irregular,
“ disorderly, and unsettled; to remove
“ which bad dispositions, (inconsistent with
“ God’s friendship and favour, driving
“ us into sin and misery,) and to beget
“ those contrary to them, the KNOWLEDGE
“ and belief of divine truth, a love of
“ goodness and delight therein; a well
“ composed, orderly, and steady frame or
“ spirit, God in mercy doth grant to us
“ the virtue of his Holy Spirit; who first
“ *opening our hearts*, so as to let in and
“ apprehend the light of divine truth,
“ then, by representation of proper argu-
“ ments, persuading our reason to em-
“ brace it, begetteth divine knowledge,
“ wisdom, and faith in our minds, which
“ is the work of illumination and instruc-
“ tion, the first part of his office respect-
“ ing our salvation.

“ Then by continual impressions he
“ bendeth our inclinations, and mollifieth
“ our hearts, and tempereth our affec-
“ tions to a willing compliance with God’s
“ will, and a hearty complacence in that
“ which is good and pleasing to God ; so
“ breeding all pious and virtuous inclina-
“ tions in us, reverence towards God,
“ charity to men, sobriety and purity as
“ to ourselves, with the rest of those
“ amiable and heavenly virtues of soul,
“ which is the work of sanctification, ano-
“ ther great part of his office.

“ Both these operations together (en-
“ lightening our minds, sanctifying our
“ wills and affections) do constitute and
“ accomplish that work, which is styled
“ the regeneration, renovation, vivifica-
“ tion, new creation, resurrection of a
“ man ; the faculties of our souls being so
“ improved, that we become, as it were,
“ other men thereby ; able and apt to do
“ that for which before we were altoge-
“ ther indisposed and unfit.

“ He

“ He also directeth and governeth our
“ actions, continually leading and moving
“ us in the ways of obedience to God’s
“ holy will and law. As we live by him,
“ (having a new spiritual life implanted in
“ us,) so we *walk by him*, are continually
“ led and acted by his conduct and help.
“ He reclaimeth us from error and sin;
“ he supporteth and strengtheneth us in
“ temptation; he adviseth and admonish-
“ eth, exciteth and encourageth us to all
“ works of piety and virtue.

“ Particularly he guideth and quicken-
“ eth us in devotion, shewing us what we
“ should ask, raising in us holy desires and
“ comfortable hopes, disposing us to ap-
“ proach unto God with firm dispositions
“ of mind, love, and reverence, and hum-
“ ble confidence.

“ It is also a notable part of the Holy
“ Spirit’s office to comfort and sustain us
“ in all our religious practice, so parti-
“ cularly in our doubts, difficulties, dis-
“ tresses, and afflictions; to beget joy,
“ peace, and satisfaction in us, in all our
“ perform-

“ performances, and in all our sufferings,
 “ whence the title of Comforter belongeth
 “ to him.

“ It is also another part thereof to assure
 “ us of God’s gracious love and favour,
 “ and that we are his children; confirm-
 “ ing in us the hopes of our everlasting
 “ inheritance. We feeling ourselves to
 “ live spiritually by him, to love God
 “ and goodness, to thirst after righteouf-
 “ ness, and to delight in pleasing God,
 “ are thereby raised to hope God loves
 “ and favours us; and that he having, by
 “ so authentic a seal, ratified his word and
 “ promise, having already bestowed so
 “ sure a pledge, so precious an earnest,
 “ so plentiful first-fruits, will not fail to
 “ make good the remainder designed and
 “ promised us, of everlasting joy and
 “ blifs.”

Let no man be afraid or ashamed of
 maintaining opinions on the *divine energy*,
 which are thus supported by the first of
 scholars and philosophers, ISAAC BAR-
 ROW.

SECTION IX.

Bishop Bull's Opinion on the Evidence of the Spirit of God on the Mind of Man, and its Union with it; the Loss of that Spirit by Adam's Fall, and the Recovery of it by Christ.

“THE second way,” says Bishop Bull,
 “ by which the Spirit of God witnesseth with our spirit, that we are the
 “ sons of God, is by enlightening our understandings and strengthening the eyes
 “ of our minds, as occasion requires, to discern those gracious fruits and effects
 “ which God hath wrought in us.

“ The Spirit of God, which in the first
 “ beginning of things moved upon the
 “ face of the great deep, and invigorated
 “ the chaos, or dark and confused heap
 “ of things, and caused light to shine out
 “ of that darkness, can, with the greatest
 “ ease, when he pleases, cause the light
 “ of

“ of divine consolation to arise and shine
“ upon the dark and disconsolate soul.
“ And this he often doth. I may here
“ appeal to the **EXPERIENCE** of many
“ good Christians, who sometimes find a
“ sudden joy coming into their minds,
“ **ENLIGHTENING** their **UNDERSTAND-**
“ **INGS**, dispelling all clouds from thence,
“ warming and enlivening their affections,
“ and enabling them to discern the graces
“ of God shining in their brightness, and
“ to **FEEL** them vigorously acting in their
“ souls, so that they have been, after a sort,
“ **TRANSFIGURED** with their Saviour, and
“ wished, with St. Peter, that they might
“ always dwell on that mount Tabor.****

“ Man may be considered in a double
“ relation; first in relation to the *natural*,
“ *animal*, and *earthly* life; and so he is a
“ perfect man, that hath only a *reasonable*
“ soul and body adapted to it; for the
“ powers and faculties of these are suffi-
“ cient to the exercise of the functions and
“ operations belonging to such a life. But
“ secondly, man may be considered in
“ order

“ order to a *supernatural* end, and as de-
“ signed to a spiritual and celestial life ;
“ and of this life the SPIRIT OF GOD is
“ the principle. For man’s natural powers
“ and faculties, even as they were before
“ the fall, ENTIRE, were not sufficient or
“ able of themselves to reach such a *su-*
“ *pernatural* end, but needed the power of
“ the DIVINE SPIRIT to strengthen, ele-
“ vate, and raise them. He that denies
“ this, opposes himself against the stream
“ and current of the holy scriptures, and
“ the consent of the Catholic church.
“ Therefore to the perfect constitution of
“ man, considered in this relation, a rea-
“ sonable soul and a body adapted there-
“ unto are not sufficient ; but there is
“ necessarily required an union of the
“ DIVINE SPIRIT with both, as it were a
“ THIRD ESSENTIAL PRINCIPLE. This,
“ as it is a certain truth, so it is a great
“ MYSTERY OF CHRISTIANITY.****

“ The great Basil, in his homily in-
“ titled, *Quod Deus non est Author pec-*
“ *cati*, speaking of the nature of man, as
“ it

“ it was at first created, hath these words:
 “ * *What was the chief or principal good it*
 “ *enjoyed?* THE ASSESSION OF GOD AND
 “ ITS CONJUNCTION WITH HIM BY LOVE;
 “ *from which, when it fell, it became de-*
 “ *praved with various and manifold evils.*
 “ So in his book, *de Spiritu Sancto*, cap.
 “ 15, he plainly tells us, † *The dispensa-*
 “ *tion of God and our Saviour towards*
 “ *man, is but the recalling of him from*
 “ *the fall, and his return into the friend-*
 “ *ship of that God, from that alienation*
 “ *which sin had caused. This was the end*
 “ *of Christ's coming in the flesh, of his life*

“ Τὸ δὲ ἢ αὐτῇ τὸ προσηύμενον αἴσθησι; ἢ προσ-
 “ δρία του θεῷ, καὶ ἡ διὰ τῆς ἀγάπης συνάφεια· ἧς ἐκ-
 “ πεισθῆσα, τοῖς ποικίλοις καὶ πολυτρόποις ἀρξῶν ἡμῶν
 “ ἐκακώθη.”

† “ Ἡ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν περὶ τὸν ἀνθρώπου
 “ οἰκονομία, ἀνάκλησις ἴστω ἀπὸ τῆς ἐκπίπτουσης, καὶ ὑπα-
 “ νοδῶ· εἰς δικαιοσύνην θεοῦ, ἀπὸ τῆς διὰ τὴν παρακλήσιν ὑπο-
 “ μενης ἀλλοτριώσεως· διὰ τοῦτο, ἡ μετὰ σαρκὸς ἐπιδημία
 “ Χριστοῦ· ἡ τῶν εὐαγγελικῶν πολυτευμάτων ὑποκρίψεως· τὰ
 “ πάθη· ὁ σταυρὸς· ἡ ταφή· ἡ ἀνάστασις, ὥστε τὸν σωζό-
 “ μενον ἄνθρωπον διὰ μυστήριον Χριστοῦ, τὴν ἀρχαίαν ἐκείνου
 “ οὐνοθεσίαν ἀπὸ λαθεῖν.”

“ and

“ and conversation described in the gospel,
 “ of his passion, cross, burial, and resur-
 “ rection; that man, who is saved by
 “ the imitation of Christ, might regain
 “ that ANTIENT ADOPTION. Where he
 “ plainly supposeth that man before his
 “ fall had the adoption of a son, and con-
 “ sequently the Spirit of adoption. And
 “ so he expressly interprets himself after-
 “ wards in the same chapter: *By the*
 “ ** Holy Spirit we are restored into para-*
 “ *dise, we regain the kingdom of heaven,*
 “ *we return to the adoption of sons.* Again,
 “ (*Homil. advers. Eunomium 5, p. 117.*)
 “ which have these express words: † *We*

* “ Δια πνεύματος ἁγίου, ἢ εἰς παραδείσου ἀποκατάσ-
 “ τασιν ἢ εἰς βασιλείαν ὑρανῶν ἀποδοῦναι ἢ εἰς υἰοθεσίαν
 “ ἱπανάδοῦναι. *Vide ejusdem Libri, cap. 9.*”

† “ Ἐν ἁγιασμῷ τοῦ πνεύματος ἐκλήθημεν, ὡς ὁ ἀπό-
 “ τολος διδάσκει, τὸτο ἡμᾶς ἀνακαίνωσι, καὶ πάλιν εἰκόνας
 “ ἀναδείκνυσιν θεῷ, διὰ ἁγίων πνεύματος καὶ ἀνακαί-
 “ νωσιν πνεύματος ἁγίου υἰοθετήμεθα κυρίῳ· καὶ πάλιν
 “ κρίσις μετὰ λαμβάνουσα τοῦ πνεύματος, ἢ περ ἐγερμένη
 “ πεπαλαίωσιν εἰκὼν πάλιν θεῷ ὁ ἀνθρώπος ἐκπεσὼν τῆς
 “ ὁμοιότητος τῆς θείας, καὶ παρασυμβληθεὶς κήρυξι ἀνοή-
 “ τοις καὶ ὁμοιωθεὶς αὐτοῖς.

“ are

“ are called in the sanctification of the
 “ Spirit, as the apostle teacheth. This
 “ (Spirit) renews us, and makes us again
 “ the image of God, and by the laver of
 “ regeneration, and the renewing of the
 “ Holy Ghost, we are adopted to the Lord,
 “ and the new creature again partakes of
 “ the Spirit, of which being deprived, it
 “ had waxed old. And thus man becomes
 “ again the image of God, who had fallen
 “ from the divine similitude, and was be-
 “ come like the beasts that perish.

“ St. Cyril (7th Dial. de Trin. p. 653.)
 “ delivers the same doctrine with great
 “ perspicuity and elegance, in these words:
 “ * For when the animal (viz. man) had
 “ turned

* “ Διαπνευκότες γὰρ τῷ ζῳῷ πρὸς τὸ πλημμελεῖς, καὶ
 “ τὴν εἰσποίητον ἁμαρτίαν ἐκ τῆς εἰσάπαυ φιλοσαρκίας ἢ
 “ ῥωσθηκότες, τὸ πρὸς θεϊαν εἰκόνα διαμορφῶν αὐτοί, καὶ
 “ σημάζειν δικὴν ἀπορρήτως ἐπληθύνονται ἀπειροσφίζῳ πνεύματι,
 “ φθαλέον τε ἔγω, καὶ ἀκαλλές, καὶ τί γὰρ ἔχῃ τῶν ἐκτόπων
 “ συνειλοχὸς ἀναπείφονται; ἐπεὶ δὲ ὁ τῶν ὅλων γεννηθεὶς
 “ ἀνακομίζειν ἔθελεν εἰς ἐδραιότητα, καὶ εὐκοσμίαν τὴν ἐν ἀρ-
 “ χαίς τὸ διολισθῆσαν εἰς φθοράν, παρὰ στήμνόν τε, καὶ ἀκαλλές
 “ διὰ

" turned aside unto wickedness, and out of
 " too much love of the flesh had superin-
 " duced on himself the disease of sin, THAT
 " SPIRIT WHICH FORMED HIM AFTER
 " THE DIVINE IMAGE, AND AS A SEAL
 " WAS SECRETLY IMPRESSED ON HIS
 " SOUL, WAS SEPARATED FROM HIM; and
 " so he became corruptible and deformed,
 " and every way vicious. But after that
 " the Creator of the universe had designed
 " to restore to its pristine firmness and
 " beauty that which was fallen into corrup-
 " tion, and was become adulterated and de-
 " formed by sin superinduced, he sent again
 " into it that divine and holy Spirit which
 " was withdrawn from it, and which hath
 " a natural aptitude and power to change
 " us into the celestial image, viz. by trans-
 " forming us into his own likeness. And
 " in the fourth book of the same work,

" διὰ τὴν εἰσποίησιν γενοὺς ἁμαρτίαν, ἐνῆκεν αὐτῷ τὸ
 " ἀποφειτῆσαι πολλοὺς θεῶν τι, καὶ ἅγιον πνεῦμα, μεταποιεῖν
 " εἰ μάλᾳ πρὸς τὴν ὑπερκόσμιον εἰκόνα, καὶ πεφυκὲς καὶ δι-
 " νάμενον διὰ τὸ πρὸς ἰδίαν ἡμᾶς μεταρρυθμίζειν ἰμπερίαν."

" When

“ * *When the only begotten Son was made*
 “ *man, finding man's nature bereft of its*
 “ *antient and primitive good, he hastened*
 “ *to transform it again into the same state,*
 “ *out of the fountain of his fulness, send-*
 “ *ing forth (the Spirit), and saying, RE-*
 “ **CEIVE THE HOLY GHOST.**”

* “ Ὅτι γέγονε ἄνθρωπος ὁ μονογενὴς, ἐξήμην τῷ πάλαι,
 “ καὶ ἐν ἀρχαῖς ἀγαθὴ τῇ ἀνθρώπου φύσει εὐρώ, πάλιν αὐτῇ
 “ εἰς ἐκείνη μελαστοιχείῃ ἠπειγίλο, καθάπερ ἀπὸ πηγῆς τοῦ
 “ ἰδίου πληρώματός· ἐπεὶς τι καὶ λέγω· λαβετε πνεῦμα ἅγιον.”

ST. CYRIL,

SECTION X.

The Opinions of Bishop Pearson and Doctor Scott, Author of the Christian Life, and an Advocate for natural Religion, against spiritual Pretensions.

BISHOP Pearson is in the highest esteem as a divine. His book on the Creed is recommended by tutors, by Bishops' chaplains, and by Bishops, to young students in the course of their reading preparatory to holy orders. It has been most accurately examined and universally approved by the most eminent theologues of our church, as an orthodox exposition of the Christian Creed. Let us hear him on the subject of the SPIRIT'S evidence, which now engages our attention.

“ As the increase and perfection, so the
 “ original or initiation of faith is from the
 “ Spirit of God, not only by an EXTER-
 “ NAL PROPOSAL IN THE WORD, but by
 “ an INTERNAL ILLUMINATION in the
 “ soul,

“foul, by which we are inclined to the
 “obedience of faith, in *assenting* to those
 “truths which unto a natural and carnal
 “man are foolishness. And thus we af-
 “firm not only the revelation of the will
 “of God, but also the *illumination of the*
 “*soul of man*, to be part of the office of
 “the Spirit of God *.”

Dr. Scott, an orthodox divine, a zealous
 teacher of *morality*, celebrated for a book
 intitled the *Christian Life*, says, “That with-
 “out the Holy Ghost we can do nothing;
 “that he is the AUTHOR AND FINISHER of
 “our faith, who worketh in us to will and
 “to do of his good pleasure. His first
 “office is the *informing of our minds* with
 “the *light* of heavenly truth. Thus the
 “apostle prays that the God of our Lord
 “Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, would
 “give unto them the Spirit of wisdom and
 “revelation in the knowledge of him,
 “that THE EYES OF THEIR UNDERSTAND-
 “INGS being enlightened, they might

* Bishop Pearson on the Creed, Art. 8.

“ know what is the hope of Christ’s calling*;
 “ and we are told, *that it is by RECEIVING*
 “ *THE SPIRIT OF GOD, that we KNOW*
 “ *the things that are freely given us of*
 “ *God †.*

“ Now this illumination of the Spirit is
 “ twofold: first, external, by that revela-
 “ tion which he hath given us of God’s
 “ mind and will in the holy scripture, and
 “ that miraculous evidence by which he
 “ sealed and attested it; *for all scripture*
 “ *is given by inspiration of God ‡; or, as it*
 “ *is elsewhere expressed, was delivered by*
 “ *holy men, as they were moved by the Holy*
 “ *Ghost §; and all those miraculous testi-*
 “ *monies we have to the truth and divin-*
 “ *ity of scripture are from the Holy*
 “ *Ghost, and, upon that account, are*
 “ *called the demonstration of the Spirit;*
 “ *so that all the light we receive from*
 “ *scripture, and ALL the evidence we have*
 “ *that that light is divine, we derive ori-*
 “ *ginally from the Holy Spirit.*

* Ephes. i. 17, 18.

† 1 Cor. ii. 12.

‡ 2 Tim. iii. 16.

§ 2 Pet. i. 21.

“ But besides this *external* illumination
“ of the Holy Spirit, there is also an IN-
“ TERNAL one, which consists in impress-
“ ing that external light and evidence of
“ scripture upon our *understandings*, where-
“ by we are enabled more clearly to ap-
“ prehend, and more effectually to *believe*
“ it.

“ For though the divine Spirit doth not
“ (at least in the ordinary course of his
“ operation) illuminate our minds with
“ any *new* truths, or new evidences of
“ truth, but only presents to our minds
“ those *old* and primitive truths and evi-
“ dences which he at first revealed and
“ gave to the world; yet there is NO
“ DOUBT but he *still* continues not only to
“ suggest them both to our minds, but to
“ urge and repeat them with that impor-
“ tunity, and thereby to imprint them
“ with that clearness and efficacy, as that
“ if we do not, through a *wicked* preju-
“ dice against them, wilfully divert our
“ minds from them to vain or sinful ob-
“ jects, we must unavoidably apprehend
“ them

“ them far more distinctly, and assent to
“ them far more cordially and effectually,
“ than otherwise we should or COULD
“ have done; for our minds are *naturally*
“ so vain and stupid, so giddy, listless, and
“ inadvertent, especially in spiritual things,
“ which are abstract from common sense,
“ as that, did not the Holy Spirit fre-
“ quently present, importunately urge, and
“ thereby fix these on our minds, our
“ KNOWLEDGE of them would be so con-
“ fused, and our belief so wavering and
“ unstable, as that they would never have
“ any preventing influence on our WILLS
“ and AFFECTIONS. So that our KNOW-
“ LEDGE and BELIEF of divine things, so
“ far as they are *saving* and effectual to
“ our renovation, are the fruits and pro-
“ ducts of this INTERNAL ILLUMINA-
“ TION *.”

* Scott's Christian Life, part. ii. chap. 7.

SECTION XI.

Opinion of Bishop Sanderson on the Impossibility of becoming a Christian without supernatural Assistance.

“IT was Simon Magus’s error to think
 “ that the gift of God might be pur-
 “ chased with money; and it hath a
 “ spice of his sin, and so may go for a
 “ kind of simony, to think that spiritual
 “ gifts may be purchased with labour.
 “ You may rise up early and go to bed
 “ late, and study hard, and read much,
 “ and devour the marrow of the best au-
 “ thors, and when you have done all, un-
 “ less God give a blessing unto your en-
 “ deavours, be as thin and meagre in
 “ regard of true and useful learning, as
 “ Pharaoh’s * lean kine were after they
 “ had eaten the fat ones. It is God that
 “ both ministereth seed to the sower, and
 “ multiplieth the seed sown; the principal
 “ and the increase are both his.”

• Genesis, xli. 21.

“ It

“ It is clear that *all* Christian virtues
 “ and graces, though wrought immediately
 “ by us, and with the free consent of our
 “ own wills, are yet the fruit of God’s
 “ Spirit working in us. That is to say,
 “ they do not proceed originally from any
 “ strength of nature, or any inherent
 “ power in man’s free-will; nor are they
 “ acquired by the culture of philosophy,
 “ the advantages of education, or any im-
 “ provement whatsoever of natural abi-
 “ lities by the helps of art or industry :
 “ but are in truth the proper effects of
 “ that supernatural grace which is given
 “ unto us by the good pleasure of God
 “ the Father, merited for us by the pre-
 “ cious blood of God the Son, and con-
 “ veyed into our hearts by the sweet and
 “ secret inspirations of God the Holy
 “ Ghost. Love, joy, and peace are
 “ fruits, not at all of the flesh, but merely
 “ of the Spirit.

“ All those very many passages in the
 “ New Testament which either set forth
 “ the unframeableness of our nature to the

“ doing of any thing that is good, (*not*
 “ *that we are sufficient of ourselves to think*
 “ *a good thought; in me, that is in my*
 “ *flesh, there dwelleth no good thing* *; and
 “ the like,) or else ascribe our best per-
 “ formances to the glory of the grace of
 “ God, (*without me you can do nothing.*
 “ *All our sufficiency is of God. Not of*
 “ *yourselves; it is the gift of God. It is*
 “ *God that worketh in you both the will*
 “ *and deed* †; and the like,) are so many
 “ clear confirmations of the truth. Upon
 “ the evidence of which truth it is that
 “ our mother the church hath taught us
 “ in the public service to beg at the hands
 “ of almighty God that he would *endue us*
 “ *with the grace of his Holy Spirit, to*
 “ *amend our lives according to his holy*
 “ *word*: and again, (consonantly to the
 “ matter we are in hand with, almost in-
 “ *terminis*,) that he would *give to all men*
 “ *increase of grace to bear meekly his word,*

* 2 Cor. iii. 5. Romans, vii. 18.

† John, xv. 7. 2 Cor. iii. 5. Eph. ii. 8. Phil.
 ii. 13.

“ and

“ *and to receive it with pure affection, and*
 “ *to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit,*
 “ As without which grace it were not pos-
 “ sible for us to amend our lives, or to
 “ bring forth such fruits, according as
 “ God requireth in his holy word.

“ And the reason is clear: because as
 “ the tree is, such must the fruit be. Do
 “ men look to gather *grapes of thorns, or*
 “ *figs of thistles**? Or can they expect from
 “ a *salt fountain* other than brackish wa-
 “ ter? Certainly, what is born of flesh
 “ can be no better than flesh. Who can
 “ bring a clean thing out of that which is
 “ unclean†? Or how can any thing that
 “ good is proceed from a heart, all the
 “ *imaginations of the thoughts whereof are*
 “ *only and continually evil*‡? If we would
 “ have the fruit good, reason will (and
 “ our Saviour prescribeth the same me-
 “ thod) that order be taken, *first to*
 “ *make the tree good*§.

* Mat. vii. 16.

† Job. xiv. 4.

‡ Gen. vi. 5.

§ James, i. 21.

“ But you will say, it is impossible so
“ to alter the nature of the flesh as to
“ make it bring forth good spiritual fruit;
“ as it is to alter the nature of a crab or
“ thorn, so as to make it bring forth a
“ pleasant apple. Truly, and so it is: if
“ you shall endeavour to mend the fruit
“ by altering the stock, you shall find the
“ labour altogether fruitless;—a crab will
“ be a crab still, when you have done
“ what you can: and you may as well
“ hope to wash an Ethiopian white, as to
“ purge the flesh from sinful pollution.

“ The work therefore must be done
“ quite *another way*: not by *alteration*,
“ but ADDITION. That is, leaving the old
“ principle to remain as it was, by super-
“ inducing *ab extra* a *new principle*, of a
“ different and more kindly quality. We
“ see the experiment of it daily in the
“ grafting of trees; a crabstock, if it
“ have a cion of some delicate apple art-
“ fully grafted in it; look what branches
“ are suffered to grow out of the stock
“ itself, they will all follow the nature of
“ the

“ the stock, and if they bring forth any
“ fruit at all, it will be sour and stiptic.
“ But the fruit that groweth from the
“ graft will be pleasant to the taste, be-
“ cause it followeth the nature of the
“ graft. We read of λογος εμφυτος, an en-
“ grafted word. Our carnal hearts are
“ the old stock; which, before the word
“ of God be grafted in it, cannot bring
“ forth any spiritual fruit acceptable to
“ God: but when, by the powerful opera-
“ tion of his Holy Spirit, the word which
“ we hear with our outward ears is in-
“ wardly grafted therein, it then bringeth
“ forth the fruit of good living. So that
“ all the bad fruits that appear in our lives
“ come from the old stock, the flesh: and
“ if there be any good fruit of the Spirit
“ in us, it is from the virtue of that word
“ of grace that is grafted in us.”

What modern philosopher or divine can rival this great prelate? His *Prælectiones* rank him with Aristotle; his piety, with the chief of the apostles.

SECTION XII.

*Bishop Smalridge on the absolute Necessity
of Grace.*

“ **H**E who is not convinced of the ab-
“ *solute necessity* of God’s grace to
“ invigorate his obedience to the divine
“ laws, must be a perfect stranger to
“ himself, as well as to the word of God;
“ and must have been as careless an ob-
“ server of what passes within his own
“ breast, as of what is written in the holy
“ scriptures. When one gives himself
“ leisure to take a survey of his own fa-
“ culties, and observe how dark-sighted
“ he is in the *perception* of divine truths;
“ with what reluctance he sometimes
“ chuses what his understanding plainly
“ represents to him as good, and refuses
“ what his own conscience directly pro-
“ nounces to be evil; how apt his affec-
“ tions are to rebel against the dictates of
“ his

“ his reason, and to hurry him another
 “ way than he knows he should, and, in
 “ his sober mind, very fain would go;
 “ when he sets before his thoughts the
 “ great variety of duties commanded, and
 “ of sins forbidden, and the perverseness
 “ of his own depraved nature, which
 “ gives him an antipathy to those duties
 “ and a strong inclination to those sins;
 “ when he reflects on the power and cunning
 “ of his spiritual enemies, always
 “ alluring him to sin, and seducing him
 “ from the practice of virtue; when he
 “ weighs with himself the necessity of
 “ practising every duty, and forsaking
 “ every kind of wickedness, in order to
 “ secure a good title to the promises of
 “ the gospel; when he takes a view of
 “ those particular obstacles which hinder
 “ him in the exercise of several graces,
 “ and of the strong temptations which
 “ prompt him to the commission of several
 “ sins; when he considers the aptness
 “ of human nature to grow weary of
 “ performing the same things, though in

F 6

“ them-

“ themselves never so pleasant, and its
“ still greater disposition to grow faint,
“ when the actions continually to be re-
“ peated are burdensome to flesh and
“ blood ; when he compares the necessity
“ of perseverance with the difficulty of it,
“ the prevalence of things present and
“ sensible with the weakness wherewith
“ those objects affect us that are absent
“ and spiritual ; when, I say, a consider-
“ ing man puts all these things together,
“ he cannot but be convinced, that *nar-*
“ *row is the path that leads unto everlast-*
“ *ing life*, and that without ILLUMINATION
“ from the SPIRIT OF GOD, he shall not be
“ able rightly to discern it ; that *strait is*
“ *the gate* which opens an entry into hea-
“ ven ; and that he cannot, by the force
“ of his own natural strength, without
“ new power given him from above, and
“ the secret influences of God’s Holy
“ Spirit, adding force and energy to his
“ own endeavours, force his way through
“ it. Conscious, therefore, of his own
“ weakness, he will acknowledge the ne-
“ cessity

" cessity of God's grace; and being ready
 " to sink through his own natural weight,
 " unless supported by foreign help, he
 " will cry out with St. Peter, *Save me,*
 " *Lord, or ELSE I perish.*

" Some philosophers of old flattered
 " the pride and vanity of men, by teach-
 " ing them that they wanted nothing to
 " make them virtuous, but only a firm
 " and steady resolution of being so; that
 " this resolution they themselves were
 " masters of, and might exert at their own
 " pleasure. They confidently boasted that
 " their happiness was a thing wholly in
 " their own power; that they need not
 " ask of the gods to be virtuous, nor con-
 " sequently to be happy, since they could
 " be so without their aid or concurrence,
 " or even in despite of them. The *Pe-*
 " *lagians* afterwards raised their heresies
 " upon the principles which these heathen
 " philosophers had first broached; they
 " engaged in the quarrel of depraved na-
 " ture against divine grace: all our disor-
 " ders they would have to be the effects
 " not

“ not of sin but of nature ; all our evil in-
“ clinations seemed to them capable of
“ being subdued by our own unassisted
“ reason ; and they did not think the suc-
“ cour of any supernatural grace neces-
“ sary either for the combating of vice,
“ or the maintenance of their integrity
“ and virtue. But the sober Christian
“ hath learned from the scriptures to speak
“ and to think more humbly of himself,
“ and more becomingly and magnificently
“ of God ; we are there taught that *we*
“ *are not sufficient of ourselves to think,*
“ *much less to do, any thing as of our-*
“ *selves, but that our sufficiency is of God ;*
“ *that it is God, which worketh within us*
“ *both to will and to do of his good plea-*
“ *sure ; that it is by the Spirit we must*
“ *mortify the deeds of the body, if we would*
“ *live ; that it is God who, by his Spirit,*
“ *makes us perfect in every good work to*
“ *do his will, working in us that which is*
“ *well-pleasing in his sight.* The humble
“ and devout Christian being thus satisfied
“ of the necessity of God’s grace, both
“ from

“ from his own experience and from the
 “ scriptures, and being *assured* of the VITAL
 “ INFLUENCES of this spirit from the pro-
 “ mises made to him in the gospel, will
 “ not be over-curious to inquire into the
 “ secret and inconceivable manner of its
 “ operation. He will choose rather to
 “ FEEL these influences, than to *understand*
 “ or explain them, and will not doubt of
 “ that power, which, though he cannot
 “ give an account of as to the manner of
 “ its working, he plainly perceives to be
 “ great and marvellous from its mighty
 “ and wonderful effects: for when, in read-
 “ ing the holy scriptures, *he finds the veil*
 “ *of darkness removed from before his*
 “ UNDERSTANDING; when those clouds of
 “ ignorance that had overcast his mind,
 “ are presently dispersed; when the doubts
 “ under which he had for some time la-
 “ boured are on a sudden cleared; when
 “ such pious thoughts as were wont to pass
 “ transiently are long dwelt upon, so as to
 “ leave behind them deep and lasting im-
 “ pressions; when these are suggested to
 “ him

him without his seeking, and are urged
and pressed upon him so importunately,
that he cannot choose but listen unto
them; when, from a calm and serious
consideration of the state of his own soul,
the odiousness and danger of sin, the
beauty and necessity of holiness, he is
led to make good and pious resolutions
of serving God with greater purity for
the time to come; when he finds a *sudden*
impulse upon his spirits, rousing
him up to the performance of some im-
portant duty which he had before
neglected; or an unexpected check,
stopping him in the midst of his course,
when he is rushing on blindly and
impetuously to the commission of
some heinous sin; when in his *devo-*
tions he finds his attention fixed, his
affections inflamed, and his heart melted
within him; when, while the voice of
God's minister preaching the saving
truths of the gospel sounds in his ears,
he is sensible of an INWARD VOICE speak-
ing with greater force and efficacy to his
soul,

“ soul, to his understanding, and to his
“ heart; when, under the pressure of any
“ grievous affliction, he feels unexpected
“ joy and comfort; when *light rises up in*
“ *the midst of darkness*; when there is
“ *given unto him beauty for ashes, the oil*
“ *of joy for mourning, the garment of praise*
“ *for the spirit of heaviness*; upon all these
“ and the like occasions he is sensible of
“ the presence and aid of God’s Holy
“ Spirit, whose *grace* alone is *sufficient* to
“ all these purposes, and whose *strength*
“ *is thus made perfect in his weakness*.

“ How the operation of God’s Holy
“ Spirit is consistent with the freedom of
“ our own wills; how far we are passive
“ and how far active in those good
“ thoughts, words, and works, which
“ are wrought in us by the influence of
“ this Holy Spirit, the practical Christian
“ doth not much trouble himself to in-
“ quire. Whatsoever is good in him,
“ that he devoutly ascribes not unto him-
“ self, but unto the grace of God which
“ was afforded him; O Lord, not unto
me,

“ *me, but unto thy name be the glory;*
 “ or having by his former sins justly me-
 “ rited to be left destitute and forsaken;
 “ in the latter case he is as ready to make
 “ Daniel’s humble acknowledgment; O
 “ *Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee,*
 “ *but unto me confusion of face.* He will
 “ leave it to others to *dispute* about the
 “ nature, extent, and efficacy of this
 “ grace, and will make it his own chief
 “ labour to obtain, to cherish, and to im-
 “ prove it; he strives, according to the
 “ best of his judgment, to form right no-
 “ tions of its efficacy, but he is still more
 “ solicitous that no mistakes in his opi-
 “ nions about it may have any dangerous
 “ influences upon his practice. He cannot
 “ be very wrong in his notions, whilst he
 “ believes that man’s will is neither so
 “ free, as without God’s grace to do good,
 “ nor so enslaved, as not to be at liberty
 “ either to concur with or to resist that
 “ grace: but whether these notions about
 “ a matter so intricate be exactly right or
 “ not, he is fully assured that he cannot be
 “ mistaken

“ mistaken in his measures of acting, if
 “ he exerts his own endeavours with as
 “ much vigour and earnestness, as if by
 “ them alone he were finally to stand or
 “ fall; and, at the same time, implores
 “ God’s grace with as much fervency, as
 “ if that alone could support him:—if he
 “ neither relies so far on his own strength,
 “ as not humbly to acknowledge that it is
 “ *God alone who works in him both to will*
 “ *and to do*, nor so far depends on the
 “ grace of God to save him, as to forget
 “ that he is required to work out his own
 “ salvation:—if, lastly, at his approaches
 “ to the holy altar, he doth prepare him-
 “ self for the reception of the blessed sa-
 “ crament, with as much care, diligence,
 “ and scrupulosity, as if the benefits he
 “ there expects did entirely depend upon
 “ the disposition he brings along with him,
 “ and his own fitness to communicate, and
 “ yet, at the same time, not trusting on
 “ his own imperfect righteousness, but on
 “ God’s infinite mercy, he doth there,
 “ with faith, with humility, with rever-
 “ ence,

“ence, address himself to that blessed
 “SPIRIT, who is the *giver of every good*
 “*and perfect gift*, that he may be fulfilled
 “with his grace and heavenly benedic-
 “tion.”

I cannot but hope that these opinions of a classical scholar, a man adorned with all *elegant* and *polite* learning, as well as with philosophy; a man, whose habits of life and social connexions tended to remove him from all contagion of enthusiasm, will, have great weight with the *elegant* and *polite* part of the world, in recommending the neglected or exploded doctrine of grace. No man needs blush to entertain the religious sentiments of Bishop Smalridge; nor can folly or fanaticism be *reasonably* imputed to divines like him, whose minds were enriched with all the stores of science, and polished with all the graces of ornamental literature.

SECTION XIII.

Human Learning highly useful, and to be pursued with all Diligence, but cannot, of itself, furnish EVIDENCES of Christianity completely satisfactory, like those which the Heart of the good Christian feels from the divine Influence: with the Opinion of Doctor Isaac Watts.

LEARNING should be the handmaid of religion. She must not take upon her the office of a judge or arbitress. Her employment is highly honourable and useful, though subordinate. Let learning be cultivated, and continue to flourish and abound. Religion is the sun to the soul; the source of light and the cherisher of life. But because there is a sun, must there be no inferior lights? God has made the moon and the stars also, and pronounced that they are good.

Never

Never let the enemies to Christianity triumph over it, by asserting that it is an enemy to learning, and tends to introduce the ignorance of barbarism. Learning, under due regulations, contributes to soften the mind, and prepare it for the divine agency.

A learned, virtuous, and religious man, whose religion is VITAL and truly Christian, is a superior being, even in this mortal state, and may be imagined, by us his fellow-creatures, to be little lower than the angels.

Nobody can hold learning, and the inventions of human ingenuity, in higher esteem than myself; I look up to them with affection and admiration. But after all, and however perfect and beautiful they may be, they are but HUMAN, the product of poor, short-lived, fallible mortals. Whatever comes from the FATHER OF LIGHTS, from him who made that MIND which is capable of learning and science, must deserve more attention and honour than can possibly be due to the most beautiful and stupendous works of human ingenuity.

These are not to be slighted, but beloved, pursued, rewarded. But I am a MORTAL. Every moment is bringing me nearer to that period when the curtain shall fall, and all *these things be bidden from my eyes*. My first attention and warmest affection therefore ought to be fixed on things spiritual and eternal.

All arts, all sciences, must be secondary and instrumental to the attainment of DIVINE ILLUMINATION. I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD, says Jesus Christ. Can any *reasonable* man rest satisfied without coming to the light after such a declaration? Will he be contented with the radiance of dim lights and false lights, when he is invited to approach the brilliant and the true?

Learning is necessary for the purposes of this life; it is an ornament and a defence. It is highly useful in religious investigation. It furnishes arguments to enforce morality, to persuade to all that is good and great, and to deter from folly and vice. But let it ever keep to its own office, which is certainly, in religious matters,

ters, ministerial. It can amuse ; it can inform ; but it cannot supply the *summum bonum*, it cannot raise fallen man to his original state. GRACE only can restore man to God's image. If learning could have done it, why were the heathens unrestored? are not the infidels often learned? and would not the advent of our Lord and Saviour have been superfluous, if learning could have repaired the ruins of the fall?

Few (as I have already said) in the mass of mankind are *learned*. They are perhaps as one to a million. What is to become of the millions then, if the gospel of Jesus Christ, by which alone they can live in the sweet tranquillity of a state of grace, and die with religious hope and confidence, cannot be received, with *sufficient evidence*, without deep learning, logical and metaphysical disputation? What is to *prove* it to *them*, who have neither books, leisure, or ability to study, if God himself do not teach them by his SPIRIT? Blessed be his name, he has taught them, and continues to teach them. It is among the *learned*

chiefly that INFIDELITY prevails. She inhabits libraries, and walks abroad in academic groves, but is rarely seen in the cottage, in the field, or in the manufactory. The poor and the unlearned do in general believe in the gospel most firmly. What is the evidence which convinces them? It is the witness of the Spirit; and thanks be to him who said *my grace is sufficient for thee*. "He that believeth on the Son of God hath this witness in himself."

The opinion of a man like Dr. Isaac Watts on the true nature of Christianity, is almost of itself decisive. He was not only a devout and zealous Christian, but a profound scholar, a natural philosopher, a logician, and a metaphysician. His life and conversation exhibited a pattern of every Christian virtue. Let us hear him.

"Every true Christian," says he, "has
" a *sufficient argument and* EVIDENCE to
" support his faith, without being able to
" prove the authority of any of the ca-
" nonical writings. He may hold fast his
" religion, and be assured that it is di-
G " vine,

“ vine, though he cannot bring any learned
 “ proof that the book that contains it is
 “ divine too; nay, though the book itself
 “ should even happen to be *lost* or *de-*
 “ *stroyed*; and this will appear, with open
 “ and easy conviction, by asking a few
 “ such questions as these:

“ Was not this same gospel preached
 “ with glorious success before the New
 “ Testament was written?

“ Were not the same doctrines of sal-
 “ vation by Jesus Christ published to the
 “ world by the ministry of the apostles,
 “ and made effectual to convert thousands,
 “ before they set themselves to commit
 “ these doctrines to writing?

“ And had not every sincere believer,
 “ every true convert, this blessed witness
 “ in himself, that Christianity was from
 “ God?

“ Eight or ten years had passed away,
 “ after the ascension of Christ, before any
 “ part of the New Testament was writ-
 “ ten; and what multitudes of Christian
 “ converts were born again by the preach-
 “ ing

" ing of the word, and raised to a divine
 " and heavenly life, long ere this book
 " was half finished or known, and that
 " among the heathens as well as Jews.
 " Great numbers of the *Gentile* world be-
 " came holy believers, each of them hav-
 " ing the *epistle of Christ written in the*
 " *heart*, and bearing about *within them* a
 " noble and convincing proof that this
 " religion was divine; and that without a
 " *written gospel, without epistles, and*
 " without a BIBLE.

" In the first ages of Christianity, for
 " several hundred years together, how
 " few among the common people were
 " able to read? How few could get the
 " possession or the use of a Bible, when all
 " sacred as well as profane books were of
 " necessity copied by writing? How few
 " of the populace, in any large town or
 " city, could obtain or could use any small
 " part of scripture, before the art of print-
 " ing made the word of God so common?
 " And yet millions of these were regene-
 " rated,

“ rated, sanctified, and saved by the mi-
“ nistration of the gospel.

“ Be convinced then that Christianity
“ has a more noble *inward witness* be-
“ longing to it than is derived from ink
“ and paper, from precise letters and syllables. And though God, in his great
“ wisdom and goodness, saw it necessary
“ that the New Testament should be writ-
“ ten, to preserve these holy doctrines un-
“ corrupted through all ages, and though
“ he has been pleased to be the invariable
“ and authentic rule of our faith and prac-
“ tice, and made it a glorious instrument
“ of instructing ministers and leading men
“ to salvation in all these latter times; yet
“ Christianity has a *secret witness* in the
“ hearts of believers, that *does not de-*
“ *pend on their knowledge and proof of*
“ *the authority of the scriptures*, nor of
“ any of the controversies that in latter
“ ages have attended the several manu-
“ script copies and different readings and
“ translations of the Bible.

“ Now

“ Now this is of admirable use and im-
 “ portance in the Christian life, upon se-
 “ veral accounts. First, if we consider
 “ how few poor unlearned Christians there
 “ are who are capable of taking in the
 “ arguments which are necessary to prove
 “ the divine authority of the sacred writ-
 “ ings; and how few, even among the learn-
 “ ed, can well adjust and determine many of
 “ the different readings or different trans-
 “ lations of particular passages in scripture.
 “ Now a wise Christian does not build his
 “ faith or hope merely upon any one or
 “ two single texts, but upon the GENERAL
 “ SCOPE, sum and substance of the gospel.
 “ By this he FEELS a *spiritual* life of peace
 “ and piety begun in him. And *here* lies
 “ his EVIDENCE that CHRISTIANITY IS DI-
 “ VINE, and that these doctrines are from
 “ heaven, though a text or two may be
 “ falsely written or wrong translated, and
 “ though a whole book or two may be
 “ hard to be proved authentic.

“ The learned well know what need
 “ there is of turning over the histories of

“ ancient times, of the traditions and
“ writings of the fathers, and all authors
“ pious and profane ; what need of critical
“ skill in the holy languages and in ancient
“ manuscripts ; what a wide survey of va-
“ rious circumstances of fact, time, place,
“ style, diction is necessary to confirm one
“ or another book or verse of the New
“ Testament, and to answer the doubts of
“ the scrupulous, and the bold objections
“ of the infidel. Now how few of the
“ common rank of Christians, whose
“ hearts are inlaid with *true faith* in the
“ Son of God, and with *real holiness*, have
“ *leisure*, books, instruction, advantages,
“ and judgment sufficient to make a tho-
“ rough search into these matters, and to
“ determine, upon a just view of argu-
“ ment, that these books were written by
“ the sacred authors whose names they
“ bear, and that these authors were under
“ an immediate inspiration in writing
“ them. What a glorious advantage is it
“ then to have such an INFALLIBLE TES-
“ TIMONY *to the truth of the gospel* wrought
“ and

“ and written in the heart by renewing
“ grace, as does not depend on this labori-
“ ous, learned, and ARGUMENTATIVE EVI-
“ DENCE of the divine authority of the
“ Bible, or of any particular book or
“ verse in it!

“ Secondly, if we consider what bold
“ assaults are sometimes made upon the
“ faith of the unlearned Christian by the
“ deists and unbelievers of our age, by
“ disputing against the authority of the
“ scripture, by ridiculing the strange nar-
“ ratives and sublime doctrines of the
“ Bible, by setting the seeming contradic-
“ tions in a blasphemous light, and then
“ demanding, “ How can you prize or
“ how can you believe that this book is
“ the word of God, or that the religion it
“ teaches is divine?” In such an hour of
“ contest, how happy is the Christian that
“ can say, “ Though I am not able to
“ solve all the *difficulties* in the Bible, nor
“ maintain the sacred authority of it against
“ the cavils of wit and learning, yet I am
“ *well assured* that the doctrines of this
“ book

“ book are sacred, and the authority of
“ them divine ; for when I heard and re-
“ ceived them, they changed my nature,
“ they subdued my sinful appetites, they
“ made a new creature of me, and raised
“ me from death to life ; they made me
“ LOVE GOD above all things, and gave
“ me the lively and well-grounded hope
“ of *his* love. Therefore I cannot doubt
“ but that the CHIEF PRINCIPLES of this
“ book are divine, though I cannot so
“ well prove that the very words and
“ syllables of it are so too ; for it is the
“ sense of scripture, and not the mere let-
“ ters of it, on which I build my hope.
“ What if the scripture should not be di-
“ vine ? What if this gospel and the other
“ epistles should not be written by inspira-
“ tion ? What if these should be merely
“ the words of men, and not the very
“ word of God ?—Though I cannot re-
“ collect all the arguments that prove
“ Matthew, Mark, and Luke to be di-
“ vine historians, or Peter and Paul to be
“ inspired writers ; yet the substance and
chief

“ *chief sense* of these gospels and their
 “ epistles must needs be divine; FOR IT
 “ HAS BEGUN THE SPIRITUAL AND ETER-
 “ NAL LIFE IN MY SOUL; and THIS IS MY
 “ WITNESS, or rather the witness of the
 “ SPIRIT OF GOD within us, that CHRIST
 “ IS THE SON OF GOD, the SAVIOUR OF
 “ SINNERS, and the religion that I profess
 “ and practise is safe and divine.”

“ And though there are many and suffi-
 “ cient arguments drawn from criticism,
 “ history, and human learning to prove
 “ the sacred authority of the Bible, and
 “ such as may give abundant satisfaction
 “ to an honest inquirer, and full satisfac-
 “ tion that it is the word of God; yet THIS
 “ IS THE CHIEF EVIDENCE that the *great-*
 “ *est part of Christians* can ever attain of
 “ the divine original of the holy scripture
 “ itself, as well as the truth of the doc-
 “ trines contained in it, namely, *That*
 “ *they have found a holy and heavenly*
 “ CHANGE passed upon them, by reading
 “ and hearing the propositions, the his-
 “ tories, the precepts, the promises, and

“ the threatenings of this book ; and
“ thence they are wont to infer, that the
“ God of truth would not attend a book,
“ which was not agreeable to his mind,
“ with such glorious instances of his own
“ POWER and GRACE.

“ I have dwelt the longer on shewing
“ that the inward *witness* is such a witness
“ to the truth of the Christian religion as
“ does not depend on the *exact truth of*
“ *letters and syllables*, nor on the critical
“ knowledge of the copies of the Bible,
“ nor on this old manuscript or the other
“ new translation, because every manu-
“ script and every translation has enough
“ of the gospel to save souls by it, and
“ make a man a Christian ; and because I
“ think this point of great importance in
“ our age, which has taken so many steps
“ to heathenism and infidelity ; for this
“ argument or EVIDENCE will defend a
“ Christian in the profession of the true
“ religion, though he may not have skill
“ enough to defend his Bible.

“ Why

“ Why do you believe in Jesus?” asks
 “ the unbeliever. If you have this an-
 “ swer ready at hand, “ I HAVE FOUND
 “ THE EFFICACY AND POWER OF THE
 “ GOSPEL IN MY HEART;” this will be
 “ sufficient to answer every cavil.

“ The words of St. Paul to the Co-
 “ rinthians have a reference to our present
 “ subject. *Ye are manifestly declared to be*
 “ *the epistle of Christ ministered by us;*
 “ *written, not with INK, but with the*
 “ SPIRIT OF THE LIVING GOD; *not in*
 “ *tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the*
 “ *heart*.*”

Thus far Dr. Watts, in his sermons on the
inward Witness to Christianity, where the
 reader will find a great deal of truly evan-
 gelical instruction. For my own part,
 I cannot but think this good man ap-
 proached as nearly to Christian perfection as
 any mortal ever did in this sublunary state;
 and therefore I consider him as a better
 interpreter of the Christian doctrines than
 the most learned critics, who, proud of

* 2 Cor. iii. 2, 3.

their reason and their learning, despised or neglected the very life and soul of Christianity, the living everlasting *gospel*, the supernatural operation of DIVINE GRACE. And be it ever remembered, that Dr. WATTS was a man who cultivated his reason with particular care, who studied the abstrusest sciences, and was as well qualified to become a verbal critic, or a logical disputant on the scriptures, as the most learned among the doctors of the Sorbonne, or the greatest proficient in polemical divinity.

SECTION XIV.

The Opinion of Dr. Lucas, the celebrated Author of a Treatise on HAPPINESS, concerning the Evidence of Christianity arising from divine Communication.

“ THERE is,” says Dr. Lucas, “ no
“ great need of acquired learning
“ in order to true illumination. Our Sa-
“ viour did not exact of his disciples, as a
“ necessary preparation for his doctrine,
“ the knowledge of tongues, the history
“ of times or of nature ; logic, metaphy-
“ sics, or the like. These indeed may
“ be serviceable to many excellent ends :
“ they may be great accomplishments of
“ the mind, great ornaments, and very
“ engaging entertainments of life. They
“ may be, finally, very excellent and neces-
“ sary instruments of, or introductions to
“ several professions and employments :
“ but as to religious perfection and happi-
“ ness,

“ness, to *these* they can never be indispensably necessary.

“A man may be excellently, habitually good, without more *languages* than *one*; he may be fully persuaded of those great truths, that will render him master of his passions and independant of the world; that will render him easy and useful in this life, and glorious in another, though he be no logician nor metaphysician.

“The qualifications previously necessary to *illumination* are two or three MORAL ONES, implied in that INFANT temper which our Saviour required in those who would be his disciples,—humility, impartiality, and a thirst and love of truth.”

“There is a knowledge which, like the summit of Pisgah where Moses stood, shews us the land of Canaan, but does not bring us to it.

“How does the power of darkness, at this moment, prevail amidst the light of the gospel? Are men *ignorant*? No:

“ but their knowledge is not *such* as it
“ ought to be; it is not the *light* of
“ *life*.

“ The understanding does not always
“ determine the will.

“ Though every honest man be not
“ able to discover all the arguments on
“ which his creed stands, he yet may dis-
“ cover ENOUGH; and what is more, he
“ may have an INWARD, VITAL, SENSIBLE
“ proof of them; he may FEEL the power,
“ the charms of holiness, *experience* its
“ congruity and loveliness to the human
“ soul, so as that he shall have no doubts
“ or *scruples*. But besides this, there is a
“ voice within, a divine Teacher and In-
“ structor.

“ Extraordinary natural parts are not
“ necessary to illumination. The gospel
“ takes no notice of them. Such is the
“ beauty of holiness, that it requires ra-
“ ther a fine SENSIBILITY arising from pu-
“ rity of heart, than quickness of intel-
“ lectual apprehension, to render us ENA-
“ MOURED of it.”

A truth

A truth which involves the present and eternal happiness of human beings, cannot be placed in too great a variety of lights, or too repeatedly enforced. "He that soweth to the *Spirit*," says St. Paul, "shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting *." When such is the harvest, every benevolent mind must wish to urge mankind, in this their seed-time, to sow to the Spirit. What is so important cannot be inculcated by too frequent repetition. I therefore quote authors which occur to me in the course of my reflections on the subject, whose opinions, though similar, may add weight to doctrines already advanced. Such is the above from Dr. Lucas, a most excellent divine, never charged with the least tendency to blameable enthusiasm.

I wish my reader to pay particular attention to what he suggests on the INFANT TEMPER, required by our Lord in his followers. "Except," says Jesus Christ, "ye be converted, and become as *little children*, ye shall not enter into the kingdom

* Galatians, vi. 8.

“ of God *.”—“ Verily I say unto you,
 “ Whosoever shall not receive the king-
 “ dom of God as a LITTLE CHILD, he shall
 “ not enter therein †.”

The amiable dispositions of infants must therefore be produced in the heart, before the religion of Christ can be received into it. But are such dispositions best produced, or can they be produced at all, by subtle disputations, by cold argumentation, by bringing forward objections in order to display ingenuity in answers, laboured indeed and sagacious, but, after all, unsatisfactory to many, and unintelligible to more?

Yet this mode of recommending Christianity is the only one approved by some persons of high authority; and there are those who would not venture to preach the doctrine of grace, the *teaching of God* and a *spiritual understanding*, lest they should be numbered with enthusiasts, and lose all chance of promotion and worldly esteem. This danger must be

* Mat. xviii. 3.

† Mark, x. 14.

voluntarily

voluntarily incurred by all who would succeed in repelling the rapid advances of modern infidelity. Christianity flourished wonderfully while its genuine doctrines, the glad tidings of grace, were preached; and it has been gradually declining, ever since it has become fashionable, in order to discountenance fanaticism, to recommend mere heathen morality as the essence of Christianity, and to make use of no other arguments to prove the truth of it, but such as an ingenious man, without the smallest particle of religion in his heart, might produce. Professional advocates, furnished with human arguments only and external evidence, appear to the true Christian, as well as to the unbeliever, like lawyers pleading for a *fee*, on that side of the question which they know to be wrong, or at least are not convinced is right. It is indeed certain that a dull and plodding scholar may make a wonderful display of erudition in defence of Christianity, without feeling a lively sense of it himself, or communicating it to his readers. His materials supply the ad-
versaries

versaries with arms for fresh attacks, and at the same time fail in building an impregnable rampart round the citadel which he undertakes to defend. There is usually some weak place at which the enemy enters; and, having once entered, he takes possession of the fortress, and uses the stores and ammunition against the very persons who collected them with so much labour.

Nothing of this kind can happen when recourse is had to the teaching of the Spirit. It overcomes the heart; it brings it to the lovely state of infantine innocence and simplicity; and renders him who, like St. Paul was a persecutor of it, a warm friend and advocate.

It is certain that the argumentative mode of addressing unbelievers, and a reliance on external evidence, has hitherto failed. Many of the most learned and able men of modern times, who were capable of understanding the historical, logical, and metaphysical defences of Christianity, have read them without conviction, and laughed at their laborious imbecillity.

It

It is time to try another mode : And all who are sincere Christians will favour the experiment ; for they would rather see men converted to the true religion, though they should become fervent, and zealous even to a degree of harmless enthusiasm, than totally alienated from it, and enlisted under the partizans of infidelity.

If men of the world and men of *learning** will not interpose to prevent the divine energy, we shall see it produce its genuine effects in all their vigour and maturity, as well in the world of grace as of nature. A secret operation gives life and growth to the tree, and so will it to the human soul. " I am the *vine*, ye are the branches," says our Saviour : the branches will soon wither and decay, if the sap flows not to them from the vine.

* *Nec philosophos se ostentent : sed satagant fieri*
THEODIDACTI. GREG. ix. *Ep. ad Univ. Paris.*

SECTION XV.

Passages from a well-known Book of an anonymous Author, intituled Inward Testimony.

“ **R** EAL Christians find, that as soon
“ as they apply themselves to know
“ what is *comprehensible*, in the sacred
“ scriptures, and to a sincere endea-
“ vour to do what is *practicable*, so soon
“ a FAITH in its INCOMPREHENSIBLE doc-
“ trines is produced, and then is ful-
“ filled, that *he that doth the will of God*
“ *shall know of the doctrines whether they*
“ *be of God.*

“ The DIVINE SPIRIT concurs with the
“ outward revelation in changing a man’s
“ *sceptical* disposition, and then he is *fixed*:
“ otherwise he would be as ready as ever
“ to embrace the first *plausible* argument
“ *against* the gospel.

“ We

“ We have some, who, by their mere
“ *notional* knowledge of revelation, the
“ *outward testimony* to Christianity, dis-
“ believe the reality or necessity of any
“ acquaintance with the *inward testimony*,
“ by which the DIVINE SPIRIT produces a
“ serious spiritual frame, fitting the soul
“ to receive the sanctifying impressions of
“ an *outward* revelation. They think
“ that reading of sacred scripture, and
“ forming from thence right notions of
“ Christianity, *in order to* TALK of it,
“ with a going the round of common
“ duties, and a not being guilty of com-
“ mon sins, is the *whole of the Christian*
“ religion, and all the meetness that is
“ necessary for heaven. A serious HEA-
“ VENLY FRAME, suitable to the true no-
“ tion of revelation, has no place in
“ them; they *ridicule* it in others, and
“ name it affectation, rather than any real
“ part of CHRISTIANITY.

“ An ingenious mind may argue for
“ God against the *atheist*; for CHRIST
“ against

“ against the *Socinian*; and for the out-
 “ ward testimony of the SPIRIT of Christ
 “ against the *Deist*; and he himself be no
 “ *real Christian*: but no person can well
 “ display this inward testimony of Christ
 “ in the soul, without the EXPERIENCE
 “ of it *.”

* Jam hic videte magnum sacramentum, Fratres.
 Magisteria forinsecus adjutoria quædam sunt et ad-
 monitiones; CATHEDRAM IN CÆLO HABET QUI
 CORDA DOCET. AUGUST. Tr. 3. in 1 Joan.

SECTION XVI.

*Dr. Townson's Opinions on the Evidence
which is in this Book recommended as
superior to all other.*

“ IF the word was enforced by mira-
“ cles in the times only of its early
“ publication, it has the standing support
“ and EVIDENCE of another power, which
“ is *still as operative*, where we will allow
“ it, as ever. This is declared and pro-
“ mised in the following passage: *Jesus*
“ *answered them and said, My doctrine is*
“ *not mine, but his that sent me. If any*
“ *man will do his will, he shall know of*
“ *the doctrine whether it be of God, or*
“ *whether I speak of myself.*

“ The person who enters on the study
“ of a science, of which he has only a ge-
“ neral idea, must receive many things at
“ first on the *authority* of his instructors.
“ And surely there is no one, who, by his
“ life

“ life and works, has such claim to trust
“ and confidence in his words as the
“ Author and Finisher of our faith. If
“ then we really desire to know the cer-
“ tainty of his doctrine; if we have the
“ courage to sacrifice meaner pursuits
“ to the wisdom that is from above, and
“ the felicity of attaining it; we *shall study*
“ *the truth of his religion* as he directs, by
“ the PRACTICE OF ITS LAWS. And this
“ method, he assures us, will yield us the
“ repose and comfort of *firm persuasion*.
“ Continuing stedfast in such a course of
“ discipline, we shall not seek after signs
“ from heaven, nor ask to behold the
“ blind receive their sight, the lame walk,
“ the deaf hear, or the dead raised up.
“ The healing efficacy and blessed in-
“ fluence of the gospel will sufficiently
“ vouch for its truth and excellence.

“ The EVIDENCE which thus possesses
“ the soul is not liable to be impaired by
“ time, as might an impression once made
“ on the senses; but will shine more and
“ more unto a perfect day. For the prac-
“ tice of religion, by *purifying the heart*,

“ will raise and improve the *understanding*
“ to conceive more clearly and judge
“ more rightly of heavenly things and di-
“ vine truths : the view and contemplation
“ of which will return upon the heart the
“ warmth of livelier hopes and more vi-
“ gorous incitements to obedience ; and
“ effectual obedience will feel and *testify*
“ that it is the finger of God.

“ For is nature able, by its own effi-
“ ciency, to clear the eyes of the mind ;
“ to rectify the will ; to regulate the af-
“ fections ; to raise the soul to its noblest
“ object, in love and adoration of God ;
“ to employ it steadily in its best and hap-
“ piest exercise, justice and charity to
“ man ; to detach its desires from the
“ pleasures, profits, and honours of the
“ world ; to exalt its views to heavenly
“ things ; to render the whole life godly,
“ just, and sober ? He, who impartially
“ examines his own moral abilities by the
“ pure and searching light of the gospel,
“ must discern their defects and weakness
“ in every part ; and when he well con-
“ sider

“ considers the tenor and spirit of this gospel,
“ must acknowledge that he is not of
“ himself sufficient for the attainments to
“ which it calls and conducts its faithful
“ votary.

“ What then is it that hath taken him
“ by the hand, and leads him on in this
“ rising path of virtue and holiness; that
“ prevents his steps from sliding; or if his
“ foot hath slipped, raises him again; that
“ keeps him steady in the right way; or,
“ if at any time he hath wandered out of
“ it, recalls him to it; that strengthens
“ him to resist temptations, to endure
“ toils, and so continue patiently in well-
“ doing; that, as he advances, opens to
“ his faith a still brightening view of the
“ heavenly Jerusalem, through the gloom
“ which our earthly state hangs upon
“ death and futurity; and animates him
“ to live and walk by this faith?

“ If these are exertions beyond the
“ sphere of mere human activity, the
“ question, whence such improvement of

“ soul and spirit and life proceeds, will
“ admit of an easy and clear answer. It
“ is God who blesses our earnest petitions
“ that we may do his will, and our sincere
“ endeavours to do it, with the GRACE OF
“ HIS HOLY SPIRIT; who worketh in
“ us both to will and to do of his good
“ pleasure; and thus verifies and fulfils the
“ promises, made by Christ to those who
“ ask in his name, of succour and strength
“ from on high. Christ therefore is his
“ beloved Son, by whom we are redeem-
“ ed, and in whom we are accepted. The
“ religion which he hath taught us, so
“ worthy of God in the theory, and so
“ favoured by him in the practice of its
“ laws, proves its heavenly origin by the
“ fruit it produces; and brings its divinity
“ home to the breast of the devout pro-
“ fessor by EXPERIENCE of its power unto
“ salvation.

“ It is natural to conclude, that he who
“ has this conviction of its certainty will
“ be desirous of persuading others to the
“ belief

“ belief and practice of it; and will be of
“ an apt and fit disposition to instruct them
“ in it.”

There are scarcely any *recent* divines, whose opinions ought to have more weight than those of Dr. Townson. He lived, as he wrote, according to the true gospel. He is universally esteemed by the most learned and judicious theologists of the present day ; and his opinions alone carry with them sufficient authority to justify me fully in recommending that evidence of the gospel truth which arises from divine influence, consequent on obedience to its precepts. An orthodox life, I am convinced, is the best preparative to the entertainment of orthodox opinions ; and I rejoice to find such men as Townson enforcing the doctrine, “ that if any man “ will do the will of Christ, he shall “ know of the doctrine whether it be of “ God.” He does not refer us to systematical or philosophical works, but to the teaching of the Holy Ghost, for the attainment of this knowledge ; a know-

H 3

ledge,

ledge, compared to which all other is to man, condemned as he is shortly to die, but puerile amusement, a house of cards, a bubble blown up into the air, and displaying deceitful colours in a momentary sunshine.

SECTION XVII.

Dr. Doddridge on the Doctrine of Divine Influence.

“ **A**NY degree of divine influence on
 “ the mind, inclining it to *believe*
 “ *in Christ* and to practise virtue, is called
 “ **GRACE.** All those who do indeed be-
 “ lieve in Christ, and in the main practise
 “ virtue, are to ascribe it not merely or
 “ chiefly to their own wisdom and good-
 “ ness, but to the special operation of di-
 “ vine grace upon their souls, as the ori-
 “ ginal cause of it. None can deny, that
 “ God has such an access to the minds of
 “ men that he can work upon them in
 “ what manner he pleases: and there is
 “ great reason to believe, that his secret
 “ influence on the mind gives a turn to
 “ many of the most important events re-
 “ lating to particular persons and so-
 “ cieties,

“ cieties*, as it is evident many of the
 “ public revolutions, mentioned in the
 “ Old Testament, are ascribed to this
 “ cause †. Though the mind of man be
 “ not invincibly determined by motives,
 “ yet in matters of great importance it is
 “ not determined without them: and it is
 “ reasonable to believe, that where a per-
 “ son goes through those difficulties which
 “ attend faith and obedience, he must
 “ have a very lively view of the great
 “ engagements to them, and probably,
 “ upon the whole, a more lively view
 “ than another, who, in the same cir-
 “ cumstances, in all other respects acts in
 “ a different manner. Whatever instru-
 “ ments are made use of as the means of
 “ making such powerful impressions on
 “ the mind, the efficacy of them is to be
 “ ascribed to the *continual* agency of the
 “ first cause. The prevalence of virtue
 “ and piety in the church is to be ascribed

* Prov. xxi. 1.

† Ezra, i. 1. Religion of Nature delineated,
p. 105—107.

“ to God, as the great original Author,
 “ even upon the principles of *natural re-*
 “ *ligion*. Good men in scripture, who
 “ appear best to have understood the na-
 “ ture of God, and his conduct towards
 “ men, and who wrote under the influence
 “ and inspiration of his Spirit, frequently
 “ offer up such petitions to God, as shew
 “ that they believed the reality and im-
 “ portance of his gracious agency upon
 “ the heart to promote piety and virtue *.
 “ God promises to produce such a change
 “ in the hearts of those to whom the other
 “ valuable blessings of his word are pro-
 “ mised, as plainly implies that the altera-
 “ tion made in their temper and character
 “ is to be looked upon as his work †.

“ The scripture expressly declares, in
 “ many places, that the work of *faith* in

* Psal. li. 10—12. xxxix. 4. xc. 12. cxix. 12.
 18. 27. 33—37. 73. 80. 133. 1 Chron. xxix. 18, 19.
 Eph. i. 16, &c. Col. i. 9—11, &c. *sim*.

† Deut. xxx. 6. Psal. cx. 3. Jer. xxxi. 33. xxxii.
 39, 40. Ezek. xi. 19, 20. xxxvi. 26, 27. Compare
 Heb. viii. 8—13.

“ the soul is to be ascribed to God, and
 “ describes the *change* made in a man’s
 “ heart, when it becomes truly religious,
 “ in such language as must lead the mind
 “ to some strength superior to our own by
 “ which it is effected *. The *increase* of
 “ Christians in faith and piety, is spoken
 “ of as the work of God; which must
 “ more strongly imply that the first be-
 “ ginnings of it are to be ascribed to him †.
 “ The scripture does expressly assert the

* John, i. 13. iii. 3. 5, 6. Acts, xi. 18. xvi. 14.
 2 Cor. iii. 3. Eph. i. 19, 20. ii. 1. 10. iv. 24.
 Phil. i. 29. Col. i. 11, 12. ii. 12, 13. *Vid.* James,
 i. 18. 2 Tim. ii. 25. To this catalogue we scruple
 not to add Eph. ii. 8. though some have objected
 that *το* cannot refer to *οἱ*; since the like change
 of genders is often to be found in the New Testa-
 ment; compare Acts, xxiv. 16. xxvi. 17. Phil. i. 28.
 1 John, ii. 8. Gal. iii. 16. iv. 19. Matth. vi. *ult.*
 xxviii. 19. Rom. ii. 14. Elfner’s Observ. vol. i.
 p. 128. Raphel. Observ. *ex* Herod. in Matth.
 xxviii. 19. Glaffii Op. l. iii. Tract ii. de pr. Can.
 xvi. p. 524—526.

† Psal. cxix. 32. Phil. i. 6. ii. 13. 1 Cor. vii,
 25. iii. 7. iv. 7. xv. 10. 2 Cor. v. 5. Heb. xiii.
 20, 21. 1 Pet. v. 10. Jude, ver. 24, 25.

“ absolute

“ absolute necessity of such divine in-
 “ fluences on the mind, in order to faith
 “ and holiness, and speaks of God’s giv-
 “ ing them to one while he with-holds
 “ them from another, as the great reason
 “ of the difference to be found in the cha-
 “ racters of different men in this import-
 “ ant respect *.

“ It appears probable from the light of
 “ nature, and certain from the word of
 “ God, that FAITH and repentance are ul-
 “ timately to be ascribed to the work of
 “ special grace upon the hearts of men †.
 “ As to the manner in which divine grace
 “ operates upon the mind, considering
 “ how little it is we know of the nature

* Deut. xxix. 4. Matth. xi. 25, 26. John, vi.
 44, 45, 46. xii. 39, 40. Rom. ix. 18—23.

† Lime-street Lect. vol. ii. p. 242—245. Til-
 lotson’s Works, vol. ii. p. 80, 81. Limb. Theol.
 l. iv. c. 14. § 4. 21. Brandt’s Hist. of the Ref.
 vol. ii. p. 75. Doddridge on Regen. Sermon, vii.
 p. 221—233. Jortin’s Six Dissertations, No. 1.
 Warburton’s Doctrine of Grace. Fost. Sermons,
 vol. ii. No. 5. præf. p. 104, 105.

“ and constitution of our own souls, and of
 “ the frame of nature around us, it is no
 “ wonder that it should be unaccountable
 “ to us *. Perhaps it may often be, by im-
 “ pelling the animal spirits or nerves, in
 “ such a manner as is proper to excite
 “ certain ideas in the mind with a degree
 “ of vivacity, which they would not other-
 “ wise have had: by this means various
 “ passions are excited; but the great mo-
 “ tives addressed to *gratitude* and *love*
 “ seem generally, if not always, to operate
 “ upon the will more powerfully than any
 “ other, which many divines have there-
 “ fore chosen to express by the phrase of
 “ *delectatio victrix* †.”

* John, iii. 8.

† Compare Deut. xxx. 6. Psal. cxix. 16. 20. 32.
 47. 48. 97. 103. Psal. xix. 10, 11. Rom. vii. 22.
 1 John, iv. 18, 19. Rom. v. 5. Le Blanc's Thes.
 p. 527, § 53. Burn. Life of Roch. p. 43—51.
 Barclay's Apol. p. 148. Burnet on Art, p. 120.
 Whitby Comment. vol. ii. p. 289, 290. Scougal's
 Works, p. 6—10. Seed's Serm. vol. i. p. 291.
 Ridly on the Spirit, p. 210. King's Origin of Evil,
 p. 71. 376—380, fourth edition.

SECTION XVIII.

The Opinion of Soame Jenyns on the fundamental Principles of Christianity.

“ IF Christianity is to be learned out of
 “ the New Testament, and *words have*
 “ *any meaning* affixed to them, the funda-
 “ mental principles of it are these :

“ That mankind came into this world
 “ in a depraved and fallen condition ; that
 “ they are placed here for a while, to give
 “ them an opportunity to work out their
 “ salvation ; that is, by a virtuous and
 “ pious life to purge off that guilt and
 “ depravity, and recover their lost state
 “ of happiness and innocence in a future
 “ life ; that this they are unable to per-
 “ form without the GRACE AND ASSIST-
 “ ANCE OF GOD ; and that, after their
 “ best endeavours, they cannot hope for
 “ pardon from their own merits, but only
 “ from the merits of Christ, and the atone-
 “ ment made for their transgressions by his
 “ sufferings

“ sufferings and death. This is clearly
“ the sum and substance of the Christian
“ dispensation; and so adverse is it to all
“ the principles of human *reason*, that if
“ brought before her tribunal, it must
“ inevitably be condemned. If we give
“ no credit to its divine authority, any
“ attempt to reconcile them is useless;
“ and, if we believe it, presumptuous in
“ the highest degree. To prove the REA-
“ SONABLENESS of a revelation, is in fact
“ to destroy it; because a revelation im-
“ plies information of something which
“ *reason cannot discover*, and therefore
“ must be different from its deductions,
“ or it would be no revelation.”

The opinion of a professed wit and man
of fashion may have weight with those
who are prejudiced against professional di-
vines. It has been doubted by many whe-
ther Mr. Jenyns was a sincere Christian.
I am inclined to believe that he was sin-
cere. As, in recommending Christianity,
it is right to become all things to all men,
that we may save some, his testimony is
admitted

admitted in this place, though his lively manner of writing throws an air of levity on subjects, which, from their important nature, must always be considered as *grave* by all the partakers of mortality, who think justly and feel acutely.

SECTION XIX.

The Opinion of Bishop Horsley on the prevalent Neglect of teaching the peculiar DOCTRINES of Christianity, under the Idea that Moral Duties constitute the Whole or the better Part of it. Among the peculiar Doctrines is evidently included that of Grace, which the Methodists inculcate, (as the Bishop intimates,) not erroneously.

BISHOP Horsley has proved himself a mathematician and philosopher of the first rank, as well as a divine. All his works display singular vigour of intellect. He cannot be suspected of weak superstition or wild fanaticism. To the honour of Christianity, the editor of Newton, as well as Newton himself, is a firm supporter of its most mysterious doctrines. I desire the reader to weigh well the words of this able divine, as they were delivered in a charge to his clergy.

“ A maxim

" A maxim has been introduced," says
 he, " that the laity, the more illiterate
 " especially, have little concern with the
 " mysteries of revealed religion, provided
 " they be attentive to its duties; whence
 " it hath seemed a safe and certain con-
 " clusion, that it is more the office of a
 " Christian teacher to press the practice
 " of religion upon the consciences of his
 " hearers, than to inculcate and insert its
 " doctrines.

" Again, a dread of the pernicious
 " tendency of some extravagant opinions,
 " which persons, more to be esteemed for
 " the warmth of their piety than the
 " soundness of their judgment, have
 " grafted in modern times, upon the
 " doctrine of justification by faith, as it is
 " stated in the 11th, 12th, and 13th of
 " the Articles of our Church, (which,
 " however, is no private tenet of the
 " church of England, but the common
 " doctrine of all the first reformers, not
 " to say that it is the very *corner-stone* of
 " *the whole system of redemption*;) a
 " dread

“dread of the pernicious tendency of
“those extravagant opinions, which seem
“to emancipate the believer from the au-
“thority of all moral law, hath given ge-
“neral credit to another maxim; which
“I never hear without extreme concern
“from the lips of a divine, either from
“the pulpit or in familiar conversation;
“namely, that practical religion and mo-
“rality are one and the same thing: that
“moral duties constitute the whole, or by
“far the better part, of practical Christ-
“ianity.

“Both these maxims are erroneous.
“Both, so far as they are received, have
“a pernicious influence over the ministry
“of the word. The first most absurdly
“separates practice from the motives of
“practice. The second, adopting that
“separation, reduces practical Christian-
“ity to heathen virtue; and the two,
“taken together, have much contributed
“to divest our sermons of the *genuine*
“*spirit and savour of Christianity*, and to
“reduce them to mere moral essays: in
“which

“ which moral duties are enforced, not,
“ as indeed they might be to good pur-
“ pose, by scriptural motives, but by such
“ arguments as no where appear to so
“ much advantage as in the writings of
“ the heathen moralists, and are quite out
“ of their place in a pulpit. The rules
“ delivered may be observed to vary ac-
“ cording to the temperament of the
“ teacher. But the system chiefly in re-
“ quest, with those who seem the most in-
“ earnest in this strain of preaching, is the
“ strict but impracticable, unsocial, fullen
“ moral of the *Stoics*. Thus, under the
“ influence of these two pernicious max-
“ ims, it too often happens that we lose
“ sight of that which is our proper office,
“ to publish the word of reconciliation,
“ to propound the terms of peace and
“ pardon to the penitent, and we make
“ no other use of the high commission
“ that we bear, than to come abroad one
“ day in the seven, dressed in solemn
“ looks, and in the external garb of holi-
“ ness, to be the apes of Epictetus.

“ The

“ The first of the two, which excludes
“ the laity from all concern with the doc-
“ trinal part of religion, and directs the
“ preacher to let the doctrine take its
“ chance, and to turn the whole attention
“ of his hearers to practice, must tacitly
“ assume for its foundation (for it can stand
“ upon no other foundation) this complex
“ proposition: Not only that the practice
“ of religious duties is a far more excel-
“ lent thing in the life of man, far more or-
“ namental of the Christian profession, than
“ any knowledge of the doctrine without
“ the practice; but, moreover, that men
“ may be brought to the practice of re-
“ ligion without previous instruction in its
“ doctrines; or in other words, that faith
“ and practice are, in their nature, separ-
“ able things. Now the former branch
“ of this double assumption, that virtue is
“ a more excellent thing in human life
“ than knowledge, is unquestionably true,
“ and a truth of great importance, which
“ cannot be too frequently or too earnestly
“ inculcated. But the second branch of
“ the

“ the assumption, that faith and practice
 “ are separable things, is a gross mistake,
 “ or rather a manifest contradiction. Prac-
 “ tical holiness is the end; faith is the
 “ means: and to suppose faith and prac-
 “ tice separable, is to suppose the end at-
 “ tainable without the use of means. The
 “ direct contrary is the truth. The prac-
 “ tice of religion will always thrive, in
 “ proportion as its doctrines are generally
 “ understood and firmly received; and
 “ the practice will degenerate and decay,
 “ in proportion as the doctrine is misun-
 “ derstood or neglected. It is true, there-
 “ fore, that it is the great duty of a
 “ preacher of the gospel to press the prac-
 “ tice of its precepts upon the consciences
 “ of men; but then it is equally true, that
 “ it is his duty to enforce this practice in
 “ a particular way; namely, by inculcat-
 “ ing its doctrines. The motives which
 “ the revealed doctrines furnish, are the
 “ only motives he has to do with, and the
 “ only motives by which religious duty
 “ can be effectually enforced.

“ I am

“ I am aware, that it has been very
“ much the fashion, to suppose a great
“ want of capacity in the common people,
“ to be carried any great length in reli-
“ gious knowledge, more than in the ab-
“ struse sciences. That the world and all
“ things in it had a maker; that the
“ Maker of the world made man, and
“ gave him the life which he now enjoys;
“ that he who first gave life, can at any
“ time restore it; that he can punish, in
“ a future life, crimes which he suffers to
“ be committed with impunity in this;
“ some of these first principles of religion
“ the vulgar, it is supposed, may be
“ brought to comprehend. But the *pe-*
“ *culiar doctrines* of revelation, the tri-
“ nity of persons in the undivided God-
“ head; the incarnation of the second
“ person; the expiation of sin by the Re-
“ deemer’s sufferings and death; the effica-
“ cy of his intercession; THE MYSTERIOUS
“ COMMERCE OF THE BELIEVER’S SOUL
“ WITH THE DIVINE SPIRIT; these things
“ are supposed to be far above their reach.

“ If this were really the case, the condition
“ of man would indeed be miserable, and
“ the proffer of mercy, in the gospel,
“ little better than a mockery of their
“ woe; for the consequence would be,
“ that the common people could never
“ be carried beyond the first principles of
“ what is called natural religion. Of the
“ efficacy of natural religion, as a rule of
“ action, the world has had the long ex-
“ perience of 1600 years. For so much
“ was the interval between the institution
“ of the Mosaic church, and the publica-
“ tion of the gospel. During that interval,
“ certainly, if not from an earlier period,
“ natural religion was left to try its powers
“ on the heathen world. The result of the
“ experiment is, that its powers are of no
“ avail. Among the vulgar, natural re-
“ ligion never produced any effect at all;
“ among the learned, much of it is to be
“ found in their writings, little in their
“ lives. But if this natural religion, a
“ thing of no practical efficacy, as expe-
“ riment has demonstrated, be the utmost
“ of

“ of religion which the common people
 “ can receive, then is our preaching vain,
 “ Christ died in vain, and man must still
 “ perish. Blessed be God! the case is
 “ far otherwise. As we have, on the one
 “ side, experimental proof of the insigni-
 “ ficance of what is called natural religion;
 “ so, on the other, in the success of the
 “ first preachers of Christianity we have
 “ an experimental proof of the sufficiency
 “ of revealed religion to those very ends
 “ in which natural religion failed. In
 “ their success we have experimental
 “ proof that there is nothing in the great
 “ mystery of godliness, which the vulgar,
 “ more than the learned, want capacity
 “ to apprehend, since, upon the first
 “ preaching of the gospel, the illiterate,
 “ the scorn of pharisaical pride, who knew
 “ not the law, and were therefore deemed
 “ accursed, were the first to understand,
 “ and to embrace the Christian doc-
 “ trine.****

“ AN OVER-ABUNDANT zeal to check the
 “ phrenzy of the METHODISTS, first intro-
 “ duced

“ duced that unscriptural language which
“ confounds religion and morality. ****

“ The great crime and folly of the *Methodists* consists not so much in *hetero-*
“ *doxy*, as in fanaticism; not in PERVERSE
“ DOCTRINE, but rather in a disorderly zeal
“ for the propagation of the TRUTH. ****

“ Reason, till she has been taught by the
“ lively oracles of God, knows nothing
“ of the *spiritual life*, and the food brought
“ down from heaven for its sustenance.”

The Bishop here intimates, that “ our
“ sermons are often divested of the *genuine*
“ *spirit* and *savour* of Christianity.” If
so, it is no wonder that our churches are
forsaken and our religion despised. It is
a fact, to which I have frequently been
an eye-witness, that spacious churches
in London, capable of containing thou-
sands, are almost empty, notwithstanding
the preachers every-where inculcate ex-
cellent morality. Wherever indeed there
appears, what the common people call, an
EVANGELICAL preacher, the churches are
so crowded, that it is difficult to gain ad-
mittance.

mittance. The multitude hunger and thirst for the spiritual food; yet *evangelical* preaching is discouraged by many in *high places*, because it is said to favour of enthusiasm and to delude the vulgar *. But it is this preaching alone which will preserve Christianity among us, and cause it to be considered as any thing better than a state-engine for the depression of the people.

* ERASMUS was a consummate judge of preaching and preachers. Let us hear him.

*Doctos puto quotquot crediderunt EVANGELIO. Cur enim indocti debeant appellari, qui, (ut nihil aliud,) e symbolo apostolorum didicerunt illam ULTRAMUNDANAM PHILOSOPHIAM, quam non Pythagoras aut Plato, sed ipse DEI FILIUS tradidit hominibus; qui a CHRISTO docti sunt, quâ viâ ad quem felicitatis scopum tendere. Ubique est VERA SANCTITAS, ibi est MAGNA PHILOSOPHIA minimeque vulgaris eruditio. Sed tamen inter hos egregiè doctos excellunt, quibus peculiari SPIRITUS munificentia datum est, ut ad justitiam erudiant multos; quibus DOMINUS dedit labia, non in quibus illa gentium *πῶρος* flexanima, sed in quibus ex UNCTIONE SPIRITUS diffusa est GRATIA CÆLESTIS.*

ERASM. *Eccles.*

SECTION XX.

*The Church of England teaches the true
Doctrine of Grace.*

IN recommending to more general notice the doctrine of grace, I make no pretensions to a new discovery. It is obviously the doctrine of the Gospel; it is obviously the doctrine of the Church; it is fully acknowledged by all who sincerely use that form of prayer, which is established by the authority not only of those who composed it, but of those who ever since its composition, even to the present day, retain it in the divine service.

Bishop Gibson, who was certainly a zealous friend to the Church of England, has collected a number of passages from the liturgy, to shew that the public offices of the Church are duly regardful of the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit.

“ In the daily service, we pray to God
“ to grant us true repentance and his Holy
I 2 “ Spirit—

“ Spirit—to replenish the King with the
“ grace of his Holy Spirit—to endue the
“ Royal Family with his Holy Spirit—
“ to send down upon our Bishops and
“ Curates, and all Congregations com-
“ mitted to their charge, the *beathful*
“ *Spirit of his grace*—that the Catholic
“ Church may be guided and governed
“ by his *good Spirit*, and that the fellowship
“ of the *Holy Ghost* may be ever with us.

“ In the Litany we pray that God will
“ *illuminate* all Bishops, Priests, and Dea-
“ cons with the true knowledge and un-
“ derstanding of his Word—will endue us
“ with the *grace* of his Holy Spirit, and
“ that we may all bring forth the fruits of
“ the Spirit.

“ In the Collects we pray that God will
“ grant us the true circumcision of the
“ Spirit, that our hearts and all our mem-
“ bers being mortified from all worldly
“ and carnal lusts, we may in all things
“ obey his blessed will—that God will
“ send his Holy Ghost, and pour into our
“ hearts the most excellent gift of charity
“ —that

“ —that we may ever obey the *godly mo-*
“ *tions of the Spirit* in righteousness and
“ true holiness—that by his holy inspira-
“ tion we may think those things that
“ be good, and by his merciful guiding
“ may perform the same—that God will
“ not leave us comfortless, but send to us
“ his Holy Ghost to comfort us—that by
“ his Spirit we may have a right judg-
“ ment in all things, and ever more re-
“ joice in his holy comfort—that his Holy
“ Spirit may in all things direct and rule
“ our hearts—that he will cleanse the
“ thoughts of our hearts by the inspira-
“ tion of his Holy Spirit.

“ In the office for Confirmation, we
“ pray for the persons to be confirmed,
“ that God will strengthen them with the
“ Holy Ghost, the Comforter, and daily
“ increase in them his manifold gifts of
“ grace, the spirit of wisdom and under-
“ standing, the spirit of counsel and ghost-
“ ly strength, the spirit of knowledge and
“ true godliness—that he will fill them
“ with the spirit of his holy fear—and that
“ they

“ they may daily increase in his Holy Spirit more and more.”

The articles of original sin, free-will, and justification evince that the Church of England maintains the doctrine of light, sanctity, and life, deriveable from the operation of the Holy Ghost. And there is a curious passage in a book, written by Archbishop Cranmer and the Committee of Divines, entitled *Necessary Erudition for a Christian Man*, which fully declares, that, “ besides many other evils that came
“ by the fall of man, the high power
“ of man’s reason and freedom of will
“ were wounded and corrupted; and all
“ men thereby brought into such blindness and infirmity, that they cannot
“ eschew sin, *except they be illuminated*
“ and made free by an *especial grace*, that
“ is to say, by a *supernatural help* and
“ *working of the Holy Ghost* *.”

* This book was published by Henry VIII. 1543, and approved by the Lords Spiritual and Temporal and the Lower House of Parliament.

There

There can be no doubt, in the mind of an impartial inquirer, that the church teaches the doctrine of supernatural influence in plain and strong terms; and that it derives it from the holy scriptures. “For
 “ it is by the Spirit of wisdom that our
 “ understandings are enlightened: it is by
 “ the Spirit that we are rooted and grounded
 “ in love, and that our souls are purified in
 “ obeying the truth; it is by the Spirit that
 “ we are called unto liberty; for where the
 “ spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty;
 “ in a word, it is by the Spirit that all our
 “ infirmities are helped, and that we are
 “ strengthened with might in the inner
 “ man*.”

“Without me,” says Christ, “ye can
 “ do nothing.” Our blessed Saviour opened the understandings of his disciples, that they might understand the scriptures. The Lord opened the heart of Lydia, that she attended to the things that were

* Eph. i. 17. 1 Pet. 22. Gal. v. 13. 2 Cor.
 iii. 17. Rom. viii. 26. Ephes. iii. 16, 17.

spoken of Paul. The natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of him, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.—No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.—For by grace ye are saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God*.

If there be meaning in words, these passages evince the reality and necessity of

* John, xv. 5. Acts, xvi. 14. Ephes. i. 17, 18.
1 Cor. xii. 3. Luke, xxiv. 45. 1 Cor. ii. 14.
2 Cor. iv. 6.

internal illumination from the great fountain of light. And what says the homily of the church? "In reading of God's word, he most profiteth, not always that is most ready in turning of the book, or in saying of it without the book, but he that is most turned into it, that is, most inspired with the Holy Ghost." In the same homily, a passage from Chrysostom is quoted to the following purport: "Man's human and worldly wisdom and science is not needful to the understanding of scripture, but the revelation of the Holy Ghost, who inspireth the true meaning unto them that with humility and diligence do seek therefore."

In the Ordination Office, the bishop says to the candidates for priest's orders, "Ye cannot have a mind or will thereto of yourselves, for the will and ability is given of God alone. Therefore ye ought and have need to pray earnestly for the HOLY SPIRIT. You will continually pray to God the Father, by the

“ mediation of our only Saviour Jesus
“ Christ, for the heavenly assistance of the
“ Holy Ghost.”

A great number of citations might be brought to prove that the doctrine of grace or supernatural assistance is established by the church in exact conformity to the scriptures *; but it is not necessary to insist on a truth which is evident to every one who reads the Common-prayer book and the Bible.

* It never can be consistent with the character of an *honest man* solemnly to subscribe to the doctrines of grace, seriously to pray in the church for divine influence, and then to teach and preach against the whole doctrine.

SECTION XXI.

On the Means of obtaining the Evidence of Christianity, afforded by the Holy Spirit.

I NOW come to the most important part of my subject. I have produced, as I intended, the unexceptionable authority of great and good men, most eminent divines, to countenance and support me in recommending, above all other evidence, the evidence of the Holy Ghost, to the truth of Christianity. After the suffrages of such men in favour of this sublime doctrine, no man can justly call it heterodox or improperly enthusiastical. I could indeed cite many other most respectable authorities; but I have already exceeded the just limits of quotation. It now remains to point out the means of obtaining this evidence.

FAITH IS THE GIFT OF GOD *. To the Giver only it belongs to prescribe the

* Eph. ii. 8.

means of obtaining his bounty. He has prescribed the WRITTEN WORD and PRAYER. *Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the WORD OF GOD* *. But the whole tenour of the Gospel proves, that the WRITTEN WORD has not *efficacy* of itself to convince our understandings, nor reform our hearts ; to produce either faith in God or repentance from dead works, *without the aid of the Holy Ghost*.

Now the aid of the Holy Ghost is promised to PRAYER : “ If ye,” says our Saviour, “ being evil, know how to give “ good gifts unto your children, how much “ more shall God give the HOLY SPIRIT “ to them that ask him ?”

The Holy Spirit, it appears from this passage, is the best gift which the best, wisest, and most powerful of Beings can bestow, and he has promised it those who ask it with faith and humility. An easy condition of obtaining the greatest *comfort* of which the heart of man is capable,

• Rom. x. 7.

together with full evidence of the *truth of Christianity*.

But do the inquirers into the truth of Christianity seek its evidence in this manner? Do they fall on their knees, and lift up their hearts in supplication? It appears rather that they trust to their own *power*, than to the *power of God*. They take down their folios, they have recourse to their logic, their metaphysics, nay even their *mathematics* *, and examine the mere historical and external evidence with the eyes of criticism and heathen philosophy. The *unbelievers*, on the other hand, do the same; and, as far as wit and subtle reasoning goes, there are many who think that a Tindal and a Collins were more than equal to a Clarke and a Coneybeare. There is no doubt but that infidelity is diffused by theological controversy, whenever the illumination of the Spirit, the *evidence*

* See Ditton, Baxter, Hoet, and many others, who undertake to *demonstrate*, almost *geometrically*, the truth of the gospel.

TITY of the Gospel, is entirely laid aside, and the whole cause left to the decision of human wit and invention.

He that would be a Christian indeed, and not merely a disputant or talker about Christianity, must seek better evidence than man, short-sighted as he is with the most improved sagacity, ignorant as he is with the deepest learning, can by any means afford. He must, in the words of the Psalmist *, “*open his mouth and draw in the Spirit.*” The Holy Ghost will give him the SPIRIT OF SUPPLICATION †, which will breathe out in prayer, and inhale from him who first inspired the *divine particle* ‡, fresh supplies of grace. He must *continue instant in prayer*. This will preserve his mind in a state fit to receive the Holy Visitant from on high, who brings with him balsam for the heart, and light for the understanding. The result will be full evidence of Christianity, full confidence in Jesus Christ, joy and peace on earth,

* Psal. cxix. 131.

† Zach. xii. 10.

‡ Divinæ particulam auræ.

HOR.

and

and a lively hope of salvation. What a sunshine must a mind in such a state enjoy : how different from the gloominess of the sceptic or unbeliever ; how superior to the coldness of the mere disputant in scholastic or sophistical divinity !

With respect to the *efficacy of PRAYER* in bringing down the assistance, the illumination of the Holy Ghost, not merely in teaching doctrinal notions, but in the actual conduct of life, let us hear the declaration of LORD CHIEF JUSTICE HALE, whose example I select, because he was a layman, a man deeply conversant in the business of the world, a great lawyer, and therefore may contribute to prove, that they who value themselves on their worldly sagacity, and frequently consider the affairs of religion as trifles, compared with the contests for property and the concerns of jurisprudence, need not, in the most active life and most exalted stations, be ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.

“ I can call,” says he, “ my own EXPERIENCE to witness, that even in the

" external actions, occurrences, and in-
 " cidents of my whole life, I was never
 " disappointed of the *best guidance and di-*
 " *rection*, when in humility, and a sense
 " of deficiency, and diffidence of my own
 " ability to direct myself, or to grapple
 " with the difficulties of my life, I have
 " *implored the secret guidance of the divine*
 " *Wisdom and Providence.*"

of the Gospel of Christ.
 " I can call," says he, " my own ex-
 " perience to witness, that even in the
 " external

SECTION XXII.

Temperance necessary to the Reception and Continuance of the Holy Spirit in the Heart, and consequently to the Evidence of Christianity afforded by Divine Illumination.

THE Apostle says, *Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the SPIRIT* *. The word *ακρα* in the original, here rendered *excess*, corresponds with the Latin *prodigalitas*, which, in the Roman law, characterised the spendthrift and debauchee, incapable, from his vices, of managing his own affairs, and therefore placed by the prætor under the guardianship of trustees, without whose concurrence he could perform no legal act †. He was considered as an infant and an idiot. The words of the Apostle may

* Eph. v. 18.

† See Dr. Powel's Sermon on the text.

then

then be thus paraphrased. "Be not intemperate in wine, because intemperance will destroy your reason, and degrade you to a state of infantine *imbecility*, without infantine *innocence*; but be filled with the SPIRIT; that is, let your reason be exalted, purified, clarified to the highest state by the co-operation of the divine reason, which cannot be, if you destroy the natural faculties which God has given you, by drunkenness and gluttony."

I think it evident, from this passage, as well as from the conclusions of reason, that all excess tends to exclude the radiance of grace. The mental eye is weakened by it, and cannot bear the celestial lustre *.

That great master of reasoning, Aristotle, maintained that *pleasures* are cor-

* Ωςπερ οφθαλμῳ λημνῶντι, καὶ οὐ κεκαθαρμένῳ, τὰ σφοδρὰ φωτεινὰ ἰδεῖν οὐκ οἶοντι· οὕτω καὶ τῇ ψυχῇ μὴ τῆς ἀρετῆς κεκτημένη, τὸ τῆς ἀληθείας ἐνπρεσβασθαι κάλλος. As it is impossible for an eye, labouring under a malady which causes a defluxion, to see clearly any very bright and brilliant object, till the impurity is removed; so it is for the mind, unpossessed of virtue, to reflect the beautiful image of truth.

Hierocles, in *Præf. ad Pythag.*
ruptive

ruptive of *principles* (φθαρτικαὶ τῶν ἀρχῶν); and many of the ancients were of opinion, that vice disqualified for philosophical pursuits, where the object was merely terrestrial and human, by raising a thick cloud round the understanding, which the rays of truth could not penetrate. It was for this reason that one of them maintained that "*juvenis non est idoneus moralis philosophiæ auditor;*" that though youth is most in want of moral instruction, yet, from the violence of its passions, and its usual immersion in sensuality, it was the least qualified to *comprehend*, he does not say to adopt or follow, but even to *understand*, the doctrines of moral philosophy.

One of our own philosophers*, who in many respects equalled the ancients, justly observes, "That anger, impatience, admiration of persons, or a pusillanimous over-estimation of them, desire of victory more than of truth, too close attention to the things of this world, as riches, power, dignities, IMMERSION

* Dr. Henry More.

“ OF THE MIND INTO THE BODY, and the
 “ *flaking of that noble and divine fire* * of
 “ the soul by intemperance and luxury;
 “ all these are very great enemies to all
 “ manner of knowledge, as well natural
 “ as divine.”
 I therefore earnestly recommend it to
 every serious man, who wishes to be con-
 vinced of Christianity, to consider it in the
morning †, before either the cares of the
 world, or the fumes of that intemperance ‡
 which conviviality sometimes occasions,
 blunt the feelings of the heart, and spread
 a film over the visual nerve of the mental
 eye. §.

* *Igneus ille vigor.*

† Those that seek me early (*mane*) shall find me.
 PROVERBS, viii.

‡ *Si præceptor, homo, gravatur homini discipli-
 nam humanam committere, puta dialecticam aut arithme-
 ticam, somnolento, oscitanti, aut crapulâ gravato;
 quanto magis SAPIENTIA CŒLESTIS dedignabitur
 loqui voluptatum hujus mundi amore remulenti, cœles-
 tium rerum neglectu, nauseantibus?*

ERASMUS.

§ *Verum hæc impransus.*

HOR.

SECTION XXIII.

*On improving AFFLICTIONS duly as a
Means of Grace and Belief in the Gospel.*

A CELEBRATED divine*, on his recovery from a severe fit of sickness, is reported to have said, "I have learned, "under this sickness, to KNOW SIN AND GOD." He had studied divinity, during many years, with great attention; he had prayed and preached with great ardour; yet he acknowledges, that till the affliction of sickness visited him, he was unacquainted with those important subjects, SIN AND GOD; subjects which he had so frequently considered in private, and discoursed upon before an admiring audience.

It is good for me that I have been afflicted;
said one, who had sinned egregiously in

* Oecolampadius.

His

his prosperous days, and who was rendered wise by affliction.

Afflictions, if suffered to have their perfect work, will certainly become the means of grace, cause belief in the consolatory gospel, and ultimately lead to salvation. The wandering mind returns, like the prodigal son, when under the pressure of distress, to the bosom of its father. The kind father goes forth to meet it on its return, and the interview happily terminates in perfect love and reconciliation.

More have been convinced of the truth of Christianity by a severe illness, a great loss, a disappointment*, or the death of one whom the soul loved, than by all the
defences,

* *Le moment de la GRACE, c'est une humiliation qui Dieu vous envoie, et qui vous éloigne du monde, parceque vous n'y pouvez plus paroître avec honneur. C'est la disgrâce d'un maître à qui une lâche complaisance vous faisoit en mille rencontres sacrifier les intérêts de votre conscience ; le changement d'un ami dont le commerce trop fréquent vous entraînoit dans le vice & vous y entretenoit. C'est une perte de biens, une maladie, un chagrin domestique, ou étranger ; ce sont des souffrances ; tout, HORS DIEU, devient AMER ; on ne trouve*

defences, proofs, and *apologies* which have ever been produced in the most celebrated schools of theology. The heart was opened, and rendered soft and susceptible by sorrow, and the dew of divine grace enabled to find its way to the latent seeds of Christian virtue.

Such being the beneficial effect of afflictions, it is much to be lamented, that many will not suffer them to operate favourably on their dispositions, and thus counteract, by the good they may ultimately produce, the pain which they immediately inflict. They fly from solitude, they banish reflection. They drink the cup of intoxication, or seek the no less inebriating draft of dissipating pleasure. Thus they lose one of the most favourable opportunities of receiving those divine impressions which would give them COMFORT under their afflictions, such as the world cannot

trouve plus de consolation que dans lui ; Et rebuté des choses humaines, on commence à GOUTER LES CHOSES DU CIEL.

BRETONNEAU.

give ;

give; and afford them such conviction as would render them Christians indeed, and lead to all those beneficial consequences of faith, which are plainly represented in the scripture.

SECTION XXIV.

On Devotion—a Means, as well as an Effect, of Grace—no sincere Religion can subsist without it.

MANY theologists, who have written with the acuteness of an Aristotle, and the acrimony of a Juvenal, against all sorts of infidels and heretics, in defence of Christianity, seem to have forgotten one very material part of religion—that which consists of devotional sentiment, and the natural fervors of a sincere piety. Some of them seem to reprobate, and hold them in abhorrence. They inveigh against them as enthusiasm; they laugh at them as the cant of hypocrisy. Such men have the coldness of Bishop Butler, without the ingenuity; the contentious spirit of Dr. Bentley, without the wit or erudition.

True religion cannot exist without a considerable degree of devotion. On what is true religion founded but on LOVE—the

love of God, and the love of our neighbour? And with respect to the love of God, what says our Saviour? Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. No language can more expressly and emphatically describe the ardour of devotion. Out of the heart the mouth speaketh. If the heart feels the love of God, in the degree which our Saviour requires, the language of prayer and thanksgiving will be always glowing, and, on extraordinary occasions, even rapturous.

The *effectual* FERVENT prayer of a righteous man availeth much: if it be not fervent, it cannot be sincere, and therefore cannot be expected to avail. Love must add wings to prayer, to waft it to the throne of grace.

“Man has a principle of love implanted
“in his nature, a *magnetism* of passion*,”
by which he constantly attaches himself to

• Norris.

that

that which appears to him good and beautiful; and what so good, what so beautiful, as the archetype and model of all excellence? Shall he conceive the image, and not be charmed with its loveliness?

Worship or adoration implies lively affection. If it be cold, it is a mere mockery, a formal compliance with customs for the sake of decency. It is a lip-service, of which knaves, hypocrites, and infidels are capable, and which they render, for the sake of temporal advantage.

Will any man condemn the ardour which the scriptures themselves exhibit? Must they not be allowed to afford a model for imitation? And are they written in the cold, dull style of an academical professor, lecturing in the schools of divinity? No; they are written in warm, animated, metaphorical, and poetical language; not with the precision of the schoolmen; not with the dryness of system-makers; but with florid, rhetorical, impassioned appeals to the feelings and imagination. What are

PSALMS, but the ebullitions of passion, sorrow, joy, love, and gratitude?

The truth is, that the most important subject which can be considered by man, must, if considered with seriousness and sincerity, excite a warm interest. The fire of devotion may not, indeed, be equally supported, because such equability is not consistent with the constitution of human nature; but it will, for the most part, burn with a clear and steady flame, and will certainly, at no time, and in no circumstances, be utterly extinguished.

Where the heart is deeply interested, there will be eagerness and agitation. Suppose a man, who speaks, in the church, of the Holy Ghost, and other most important religious subjects, with perfect *sang froid*, repairing to the Stock-exchange, and just going to make a purchase. The price fluctuates. Observe how he listens to his broker's reports. His cheeks redden, and his eyes sparkle. Here he is in earnest. Nature betrays his emotion. It is not uncharitable to conclude that his
heart

heart is literally with his treasure ; and that with respect to the riches of divine grace, he values them little ; and, like Gallio, *careth for none of these things*. View him again, at a great man's levee, and see with what awe he eyes a patron. His attention approaches to adoration. He is tremblingly solicitous to please, and would undergo any painful restraint, rather than give the slightest offence. The world will not condemn, but applaud his anxiety ; yet, if he is earnest and fervent, when his interest is infinitely greater, in securing the tranquillity of his mind, under all the changes and chances of life, he is despised as an enthusiast, a bigot, a fool, or a madman.

A man of sense and true goodness will certainly take care not to make an ostentation of his devotional feelings ; but at the same time he will beware of suppressing, in his endeavour to moderate and conceal them.

He will never forget, that the same sun, which emits light, gives, at the same time, a genial heat, that enlivens and cherishes all nature.

SECTION XXV.

On Divine Attraction.

SHALL we believe our Saviour himself, or some poor mortal, who has learned a little Greek, Latin, or Hebrew, and upon the strength of his scanty knowledge of those languages, and a little verbal criticism, picked up in the schools of an university, assumes the pen of a Controversialist, and denies the evident meaning of words plainly and emphatically spoken by Jesus Christ? Our Saviour says, in language particularly direct, “No man can come unto me, except the Father, which hath sent me, **DRAW HIM.**”

Fauftus Regienfis, Wolzogenius, Brenius, Slichtingius, Sykes, Whitby, Clarke, and many others, endeavour to explain away the meaning of the word **DRAW**, (*ελκυση*,) because they have taken a side in the

the polemics of Theology, against the doctrine of Divine Grace.

But what have we to do with Faustus, Wolzogenius, Slichtingius, and the rest, when we have before us the words of JESUS CHRIST? By them it appears that there is an *ATTRACTION* in the spiritual world, as well as the natural; and that the Spirit of God, a benign philanthropic Spirit, unites itself to the soul of man, and communicates to it comfort, sanctity, and illumination.

Men do not controvert the received systems of natural philosophy. They believe in the *attraction* of gravitation, cohesion, magnetism, and electricity. But in this there is no *visible* agency, no *sensible* efflux, influx, or impulse. Yet they believe it, and certainly with reason; but why should they think that God acts thus on *matter*, comparatively vile, and leaves *MIND* uninfluenced? *Mind*, that pure, etherial essence, which must be said to approach in its nature to Divinity, (if man can conceive any thing of divine,) and which has an inborn tendency to assimilate with its like.

God, we are told in scripture, is love. But love always attaches itself to its object. It is not compatible with love to be selfish and solitary. It delights in assimilation. The spirit of that God who is love, still unites itself with man, for whom it has already shewn so much affectionate regard, in the creation and redemption. It could not be consistent with the love and mercy of God to man, to leave him entirely, for ages, without any intercourse, any light, any communication, but a *written word*, in a language unknown, unread by many, and which, without Divine interposition, might be corrupted by the wickedness of man, or lost by his negligence. God's Spirit, acting upon the soul of man, at this hour and for ever, is a **LIVING, ENERGETIC, AND EVERLASTING GOSPEL**. The promise of God's assistance by his Spirit, (as St. Peter assured the first converts to Christianity,) was unto them, and unto their children, and to all that WERE **AFAR OFF** *, their successors to the remotest

* Acts, ii. 39.

ages, even to as many as the Lord their God should call.

Man must be ATTRACTED to God by the spirit of love in the Divine nature; or else he ceases to be in the Christian system; and what may be the consequence to the soul in its aberration, is known only to him who knoweth all things. But surely every thinking mortal will gladly follow the Divine attraction, since it gradually draws him from this low vale, where sin and sorrow abound, up to the realms of bliss eternal; and affords him, during his earthly pilgrimage, the sweetest solace.

The human soul assimilating with the Divine, is the drop of water gravitating to the ocean, from which it was originally separated; and cohering with it as soon as it comes within the sphere of its attraction; it is the child clinging to the bosom of its parent; it is the wandering, weary exile hastening with joy to his native home. Let us endeavour to cherish an inclination for re-union; let us follow all the known means of accomplishing it, and it will be

finally and completely effected by the Holy Ghost, the spirit of love *.

* Let us hear a Heathen philosopher speak on the union between God and good men:

Inter bonos viros ac Deum, amicitia est, conciliante virtute; amicitiam dico? etiam necessitudo et similitudo.

SENECA.

SECTION XXVI.

On the Difficulties of the Scripture.

In his solis literis et quod non assequor, tamen
adoro. ERASMUS.

IF there is any thing in human affairs to be approached with awe, and viewed with veneration, it is the WRITTEN WORD of revelation. Acknowledged sanctity and long duration combine to throw an air of divinity around it. It is worthy to be kept in the holy of holies. But I cannot agree with those zealous votaries who pretend either that there are no difficulties in it, or that they are all removable by the light of learning. I confess that criticism has removed many difficulties; but I am convinced that many still remain, which, I fear, will never give way to human sagacity. There they must remain, with all the majesty of clouds and darkness
K 6 around

around them, till the sun of righteousness shall appear in his full glory.

But shall difficulties cause disbelief? Are there then no difficulties in nature, as well as in the words of grace? I cannot step into the garden or the meadow; I cannot cast my eyes to the horizon, without encountering difficulties. Yet I believe the existence of the things I see there, and I am led from the observation of general good, mixed with partial evil, to conclude, that verily there is a God. I conclude in the same manner, from what I *do* understand and *know* to be good in the gospel, that verily Jesus is the Christ; and that the parts of the gospel which I do not comprehend, are good, because those which I am able to understand are so beyond all doubt and comparison.

All that is necessary to my happiness in the gospel is sufficiently clear. I learn there that the HOLY GHOST is vouchsafed to me and to all men, now and till time shall be no more. This I consider as the LIVING GOSPEL. This supplies all defects,

fects, if any there should be, in the written word; and the dark and unintelligible parts of the gospel, surrounded by celestial radiance, become like spots in the sun; which neither deform its beauty, nor diminish its lustre. I regard them not therefore; I bow to them with reverence, as to sacred things upon the altar, covered with a veil from the eyes of mortal or profane intrusion. It is enough that I have learned, in the gospel, many moral truths; and this one great truth, that *God Almighty*, at *this moment*, pours an EMANATION of himself into the souls of all who seek the glorious gift by fervent prayer, and endeavour to retain it by obedience to his will. It is enough: why need I perplex my understanding with searching into those *secret things which belong unto the Lord*; or acquire a minute, cavilling habit, which never can discover any thing of more importance than that which I already know; but which, if indulged presumptuously, may lead me to scepticism, and

and terminate in infidelity? Some parts of the holy volume are sealed: I will not attempt to burst it open; or vainly conjecture what these parts conceal. I will wait with patience and humility for God's good time. In the mean time I will *re-joice*; and my flesh shall rest in hope; because I have been admitted to inspect the book, and have learned that the SPIRIT still attends the *written word*, ministering at this hour, and illuminating, with the lamp of Heaven, whatever darkness overshadows the path of life.

This persuasion adds new glory to the *written* gospel. It throws a heavenly lustre over the page. It is not left *alone* to effect the great purpose of men's recovery; so that whatever difficulties or defects it may be allowed to retain, by the wise providence of God, the difficulties will be removed, and the defects supplied, so far as to accomplish the *great end*, by the operation of the Holy Ghost, which accompanies it in its progress down the stream

stream of time, like the pillar of fire, attending the children of Israel *.

* Οσοι υιοι εισι του φωτος κ, της διακονας της καινης δια-
 δηκης εν τω πνευματι αγιω, ΘΕΟΔΙΔΑΚΤΟΙ ΕΙΣΙΝ· αυτη
 γαρ η χαρις επιγραφει εν ταίς καρδιαις αυτων τους νομους του
 πνευματος· ουκ οφειλουσιν ουι εις τας γραφας μοινη τας δια μι-
 λανος γιγγραμμενας πληροφοριθαι, αλλα κ, εις τας πλάκας της
 καρδιας η χαρις του Θεου συγγραφει τους νομους του πνευματος
 κ, τα επουρανα μυστηρια.—As many as are the sons of the
 light, and of the ministraton of the New Testament
 in the holy Spirit, are *taught of God*; for grace itself
 inscribes upon their hearts the laws of the Spirit.
 They are not therefore indebted to the SCRIPTURES
 ONLY, the word written with INK, for their Chris-
 tian perfection; but the grace of God writes upon
 the tablet of their hearts the laws of the Spirit, and
 the mysteries of Heaven.

MACARIUS in Homil. 15.

SECTION XXVII.

The OMNIPRESENCE of God a Doctrine universally allowed; but how is God every where present but by his Spirit, which is the HOLY GHOST?

Οὐδὲν ἔστιν ἄνυον.

Nothing is without Deity.

MARC ANTONIN.

THEY who maintain, if there be any such, that God having, about eighteen hundred years ago, signified his will to mankind, has ever since that time withdrawn his agency from the human mind, do, in effect, deny the *omnipresence*, and with it the omniscience, providence, and goodness of the Deity. But what say the scriptures? HE IS NOT FAR FROM EVERY ONE OF US; FOR IN HIM WE LIVE, AND MOVE, AND HAVE OUR BEING*.

* Acts, xvii. 27.

But

But is it to be believed, that when he is thus *intimately* present with us, he either cannot, or will not, influence our sentiments? Why is he thus present? or why should he confine his agency over us to a LITTLE BOOK, in a foreign and dead language, which many never see at all, which more cannot read, and which few can perfectly understand; and concerning the literal meaning of the most important DOCTRINAL parts of which, the most learned and judicious are to this hour divided in opinion?

The heathens * had more enlarged and worthier ideas of the divine nature. They indeed believed in *supernatural agency* on

* *Ipse Deus HUMANO GENERI ministrat; ubique et omnibus præsto est.*—God himself administers to the human race; he is present every where, and to every man.

SENECA EPIST.

Quocunque te flexeris, ibi illum videbis occurrentem tibi. Nihil ab illo vacat. Opus suum ipse implet.—Whichever way you turn, you will meet God. Nothing is without him. He fills his own work completely.

SENEC. DE BENEFIC. Lib. 4. Cap. 8.

the

the mind of man; though they disgraced their belief by the absurdities of polytheism. Every part of the universe was peopled by them, with supernatural agents, and the most distinguished among them believed their virtuous sentiments *inspired*, and their good actions *directed* by a tutelar deity. I dwell not upon the instance of Socrates's Demon *; and I only mention the topic,

* It is worth while, however, to insert the following fine passage from Plato, in which Socrates asserts the necessity of *supernatural agency*, in removing a dark CLOUD from the human mind, previously to its being able to learn how to regulate conduct, either towards gods or men. Reason, till this dark cloud should be removed by divine Providence, he thought incapable of discovering either moral or divine truth with certainty.

S. Ἀναγκαῖον ἔστι περιμένειν ἕως ἄν τις μάθῃ ὥς δὲ πρὸς θεὸν καὶ πρὸς ἀνθρώπους διακρίσθαι. Α. Πότε ἔτι παύσεται ὁ χρόνος ὅτῃ, ὃ Σώκρατες; καὶ τίς ὁ παιδευσών; — ΣΩΚΡ. Οὗτός ἐστιν ὃ μέλει περὶ σέ. ἀλλὰ δοκῇ μοι, ὥσπερ τῷ Διομήδεϊ φησὶ τὴν Ἀθηναίαν Ὀμηρεὶ ἀπὸ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν ἀφελῆν τὴν ἈΚΑΥ'Ν,

Ὅφρ' εὖ γιγνώσχοι ἡμῖν θεὸν ἦδ' ἄνδρα,
ἔτῃ καὶ σὺ δὲν ἀπὸ τῆς ψυχῆς πρῶτον ἀφελῶναι τὴν ἈΚΑΥ'Ν,
ἢ νῦν παρῆσα τυγχάνει, τῇ ηἰκαυτ' ἥδη προσφέρειν δὲ ὃν μέλλεις
γιώσισθαι

to prove that the doctrine is not likely to be very UNREASONABLE, since it was maintained by men who are acknowledged to have been singularly endowed with the rational faculty.

The omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience of God were strenuously

γνώσκειν ἡμῖν “κακὸν καὶ τὸ ἰσθλόν.” οὐ μὲν γὰρ οὐκ ἐμοὶ δοκῆς δύνασθαι. Platonis Alcibiades II. *prope Finem.*—(*Socrates and Alcibiades discourse.*) S. It is necessary then to wait till one is informed how one ought to behave, both in *religious* and *social* duties, to God and to men.—A. O Socrates, when will that time come, and who shall teach me?—S. EVEN HE WHO CARETH FOR YOU; but it appears to me, as Homer represents Minerva removing a dark cloud from the eyes of Diomed, that he might distinguish gods from men in the battle, so he who CARETH FOR YOU must first remove the dark cloud from your mind, which now hangs over it, and then you will use those means by which you may know “the good from ill,” which, in your present state, you seem to me *unable* to distinguish.

The philosopher seems to have seen the necessity of divine revelation, and to have predicted the illumination of the Spirit of God.

maintained,

maintained, not only by the wisest of the heathens, but the most learned and rational of christian divines; among whom was Dr. Samuel Clarke, a man by constitution and studies as far removed from enthusiasm, as it is possible to conceive. But the *omnipresence* of God being allowed as a true doctrine, it will not be difficult to believe his agency on the human mind by supernatural impression. The difficulty would be to believe that the divine Spirit could be PRESENT always and every where with us, and yet never act upon us, but leave the moral world, after the writing of the New Testament, to depend on the fidelity of *translations*, the interpretations of fallible men, the preaching and teaching of scholars, deriving all they know from *dictionaries*, and differing continually even on such doctrines as constitute the very corner-stones of the whole fabric.

The doctrine of God's total inaction, in the moral and intellectual world, is irreligious

gious and unphilosophical. The wisest heathens exploded it. Fortunately it is refuted in the strongest language of scripture. For *after* our Saviour's ascension, the Holy Spirit was expressly promised, and the MINISTRATION of the Spirit, co-operating on the heart of man with the written word, is to continue its energy, as it does at this hour, to the end of time.

The spirit of God is every where present, like the air which we inhale. It is no less necessary to intellectual life, than the air to animal. There is a remarkable passage, apposite to the present subject, in the meditations of Antoninus, which I shall give in the translation of Collier, and as it is quoted by Delany.

“ Let your soul,” says the philosopher,
“ receive the Deity, as your blood does
“ the air; for the influences of the one
“ are no less vital than the other. This
“ correspondence is very practicable; for
“ there is *an ambient* OMNIPRESENT *spirit*,
“ which lies as open and pervious to your
“ mind,

“ mind, as the air you breathe does to your
“ lungs. But then you must remember to
“ be disposed to draw it.

“ If,” continues Dr. Delany, “ this
“ gracious *gift of Heaven* should be de-
“ nied, because it is not found to dwell
“ with the wicked, I answer, that men
“ may as well deny the existence of the
“ DEW, because it is not often found upon
“ clods and filth, nor even upon grass,
“ trampled with polluted feet.

“ Let the grace of God be considered
“ as having some analogy, some resem-
“ blance to the DEW OF HEAVEN; the
“ dew of Heaven, which falls alike upon
“ all objects below it, as the grace of
“ God doth upon all mankind, but resteth
“ not upon things defiled. Purity abideth
“ not with pollution.”

There is an elemental fire, the electrical
fluid, diffused through all nature. Though
unseen, its energy is mighty. So also the
Divine Spirit actuates the intellectual
word, omnipresent, irresistible, invisible.

SECTION XXVIII.

The Want of Faith could not be criminal, if it depended only on the Understanding; but Faith is a Virtue, because it originates from virtuous Dispositions favoured by the Holy Spirit.

FAITH is always required and represented in the gospel as a *moral virtue*. This alone establishes the doctrine of this book, that faith, or the evidence of the Christian religion, arises from *obedience* to its laws. There could be no virtue in faith, if it were produced in the mind by *demonstrative* proofs, such as many apologists for Christianity have endeavoured to display. But there is great virtue in OBE-
DIENCE to the moral precepts of the gospel. The heart must be *well inclined* that endeavours to learn and perform its duty from the dictates of the gospel, notwithstanding the doubts or disbelief which may
10 occasionally

occasionally arise in the understanding concerning the divine original of so excellent a rule of morality. Such an inclination draws down upon it the favour of God, and consequently the illumination of the Holy Ghost. The doubts and disbelief are gradually removed. A life of piety and good morals is the never-failing result. And thus faith both begins and ends in virtue.

“The reason,” says Dr. Clarke, “why
“faith (which is generally looked upon
“as an act of understanding, and so not
“in our power) in the New Testament is
“always insisted upon as a moral virtue,
“is, because faith, in the scripture sense,
“is not barely an act of the understand-
“ing, but a mixed act of the will also,
“consisting very much in that simplicity
“and unprejudicedness of mind, which
“our Saviour calls receiving the king-
“dom of God, as a little child, in that
“freedom from guile and deceit, which
“was the character of Nathaniel, an
“Israelite indeed; and in that teachable
“disposition,

“ disposition, and desire to know the will
 “ of God, for which the Bereans were so
 “ highly commended, *who searched the*
 “ *scriptures daily, whether these things*
 “ *were true.*”

This simple, teachable, unprejudiced state of mind is in itself amiable. It is pleasing both to God and good men. It is esteemed even by the wicked. It is precisely the state in which the Holy Spirit delights, and with which he will make his abode, bringing with him comfort and illumination. To use the poet's words;

“ ——— He must delight in virtue;
 “ And that which he delights in must be happy.”

If indeed it were a *moral virtue* merely to believe a narrative on the credibility of the narrators, or the probability of the circumstances, then would it be a moral virtue to believe a well-authenticated news-paper. But to believe the gospel requires purity and piety of heart, those lovely qualities which the imagination conceives characteristic of the angelic nature. It implies a disposition which

L

delights

delights in devotion to God, and beneficence to man; a disposition cheerful, tranquil, and which enjoys every innocent satisfaction of this life, sweetened with the hope, that when the sun sets, it will rise in new and additional splendor. Faith, accompanied with hope and charity, constitutes the true Christian; a *living image* of virtue, and forming that beautiful model which the philosopher wished, but despaired to see; TRUTH EMBODIED, VIRTUE PERSONIFIED, walking forth among the sons of men, and exciting, by its conspicuous loveliness, an universal desire of imitation.

SECTION XXIX.

*Of the scriptural word "UNCTION;" its
high mysterious Meaning.*

THE very title of our Saviour (משיח and ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ) is the ANOINTED; and the operation of the Holy Ghost is called in the sacred scriptures (ΧΡΙΣΜΑ) UNCTION. This idea of the CHRISMA pervades the whole doctrine of grace.

"The anointing with oil," says Hammond, "denoted, among the Jews, the preferring one before another, (and the *Targum* generally renders it by a word which signifies preferring or advancing,) and so became the ceremony of CONSECRATING to any special office, and was used in the installing men to places of any eminence."

The word *Chrisma*, or unction, was hence assumed to signify the act of the

Holy Ghost, in CONSECRATING those who are favoured by divine grace. The consequence of this UNCTION is illumination; for St. John says, “Ye *have* an UNCTION “ from the Holy One, (the Holy Ghost,) “ and ye (in consequence) KNOW ALL “ THINGS *;” that is, all things that concern the nature and EVIDENCE of CHRIST’s religion. Again he says, “ The anointing “ which ye have received of HIM (the “ Holy Ghost) abideth in you; and ye “ need not that any MAN teach you; but “ as the same ANOINTING teacheth you “ all things, and is truth, and is no lie; “ even as it has taught you, ye shall abide “ in him †.”

The idea of the CHRISMA, I repeat, or *unction* ‡, pervades the whole doctrine of divine grace. It gives a name to him who brought down the great gift of the Spirit, and who himself had the hallowed

* 1 John, ii. 20.

† Ibid. 27.

‡ *Dieu fait couler dans l'ame je ne sçais quelle ONC-
TION, qui la remplit.*

BRETONNEAU.

UNCTION *without measure* *; for what is signified by CHRIST, but the *Anointed* †?

I have introduced these observations on the name of CHRIST, partly with a view to expose the false learning of a *French philosopher*, who has attacked Christianity with singular artifice. The celebrated Mr. Volney affirms, that Christianity is but the allegorical worship of the SUN—a mere mode of oriental superstition, under the cabalistical names of CHRISEN or CHRIST, the etymology of which, according to him, has no reference to the CHRISMA, UNCTION, but to CHRIS, an astrological name among the Indians for the SUN, and signifying *conservator*; “whence,” says he, “the Hindoo god, “Chrisen, or Christna, and the Christian “CHRISTOS, the son of Mary.” Many of the French philosophers, and perhaps Volney, are unacquainted with *Greek*.

But I hope the christian scholar will never give up the Greek etymology of the word CHRIST, evidently a translation of

* John, iii. 34.

† κατ' ἐξοχην.

the Hebrew *Messiah* ; nor the sublime and mysterious doctrine which it leads to, the metaphorical *anointing* of the Holy Ghost, the sanctifying, consecrating, purifying influence of divine grace *.

* Mr. Vo'ney further says, that " YESUS, or
 " Jesus, was an antient name given to young Bac-
 " chus, the clandestine son of the virgin, Minerva,
 " who, in the whole history of his life, and even in his
 " death, calls to mind the history of the God of the
 " Christians ; that is, the STAR OF THE DAY, of
 " which they are both of them EMBLEMS." Let
 us avoid the folly of *fanciful learning* ; and say rather
 that the *Star of the Day* is an EMBLEM of JESUS
 CHRIST, gloriously enlightening, and vitally warm-
 ing, by his influence, the INTELLECTUAL system.

SECTION XXX.

On what is called by devout Persons EXPERIENCE in Religion.

THERE is a peace of God, which passeth all understanding, and baffles all power of description. The flavour of a peach or a pine-apple is delightful to the palate, but words can give no idea of it to him who has never tasted them. There is a fragrance in a rose, which, while the nerves perceive it with complacency, cannot be communicated, in the slightest degree, by language. Such also is the heavenly manna; and he who would form a just notion of its exquisite sweetness, must taste it. No learning, not even the argumentative skill of an Aristotle, can afford him the least idea of it, without actual sensation.

“ Were I to define divinity,” (says the admirable author of *Select Discourses*),

“ I should rather call it a divine life,

“ than * a divine science ; it being some-
 “ thing rather to be understood by a spi-
 “ ritual sensation, than by any verbal de-
 “ scription.

“ Divinity is a true efflux from the eter-
 “ nal light, which, like the sun-beams,
 “ does not only enlighten, but heat
 “ and enliven. The knowledge of divi-
 “ nity that appears in systems is but a poor
 “ wax-light ; but the powerful ENERGY
 “ of divine knowledge displays itself in
 “ *purified souls*, the true *Πεδιον Αληθειας* †.

“ To seek our divinity merely in books
 “ and writings, is to seek the living
 “ among the dead. We do but in vain
 “ seek God, many times, in these, where
 “ his truth too often is not so much en-
 “ shrined as intombed. No ; *intra te*
 “ *quære Deum* ; seek for God within thine
 “ own soul. He is best discerned ‡ *νοερον*
 “ *επαφη*, by an *intellectual feeling*. *Εστι δε*
 “ *ψυχης αισθησις τις*, *the soul itself has a*
 “ *certain feeling*.

* Bishop Taylor and Mr. Smith coincide here, not
 only in sentiment, but expression.

† The soil in which TRUTH grows and flourishes.

‡ Plotinus,

“ The

“ The reason why, notwithstanding all
“ our acute reasonings and subtile pursuits,
“ truth prevails no more in the world, is,
“ that we so often disjoin truth and good-
“ ness, which of themselves can never be
“ disunited.

“ There is a *knowing of the truth as it*
“ *is in Jesus*; as it is in a Christ-like na-
“ ture; as it is in that sweet, mild, hum-
“ ble, and loving spirit of Jesus, which
“ spreads itself, like a morning sun, upon
“ the souls of good men, full of light and
“ life. There is an inward beauty, life,
“ and loveliness in divine truth, which
“ cannot be known, but only when it is
“ digested into life and practice.

“ Our Saviour, the great master of di-
“ vine truth, would not, while he was
“ here on earth, draw it up into a *system*
“ or body, nor would his disciples after
“ him: he would not lay it out to us in
“ any *canons* or articles of belief, not
“ being so careful to stock and enrich the
“ world with opinions, as with true piety,
“ and a godlike pattern of purity, as the
“ best way to thrive in all spiritual under-
“ standing.

“ standing. His main scope was to pro-
 “ mote a holy life, as the best and most
 “ compendious way to a right belief. He
 “ hangs all true acquaintance with divinity
 “ upon the doing God’s will. If any man
 “ will do his will, he shall know of the
 “ doctrine, whether it be of God. This
 “ is that alone which will make us, as St.
 “ Peter tells us, that we shall not be bar-
 “ ren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of
 “ our Lord and Saviour.

“ There is an inward sweetness and de-
 “ liciousness in divine truth, which no sen-
 “ sual mind can taste or relish. The
 “ ψυχικος ανθρωπος, the *natural man* savours not
 “ the things of God. Corrupt passions
 “ and terrene affections are apt, of their
 “ own nature, to disturb all serene
 “ thoughts, to precipitate our judgments,
 “ and warp our understandings. It was a
 “ good maxim of the old Jewish writers,
 “ that the Holy Spirit* dwells not in

“ רוח הקדש לא שרה בעצב ולא
 “ בכעש.

“ The RUACH HAKKODESH, or *Spirit of Holiness*,
 dwells not with turbulent and angry tempers.

“ *earthly*

“ *earthly passions*. Divinity is not so well
 “ perceived by a subtile wit, *ωσπερ αἰσθesis*
 “ *hexadappueyn*, as by pure sensation.”

“ He that will find truth, must seek it
 “ with a free judgment, and a SANCTIFIED
 “ mind : he that *thus* seeks, shall find : he
 “ shall live in truth, and truth shall live
 “ in him : it shall be like a stream of
 “ living waters issuing out of his *own*
 “ soul : he shall drink of the waters of his
 “ own cistern, and be satisfied : he shall
 “ every morning find this heavenly MAN-
 “ NA lying upon his soul, and be fed with
 “ it to eternal life. He will find *satisfac-*
 “ *tion* within, FEELING himself in con-
 “ junction with truth, though all the
 “ world should DISPUTE against him.”

Thus the heart of a good man will *expe-*
rience the most pleasurable sensations, when
 he finds, and find it he will, the *pearl of*
great price, the living *energetic* gospel,
 lodged, by divine grace, in the sanctuary
 of his bosom. He will *be filled with all*
joy in believing ; and thus EXPERIENCING
 the efficacy of the Christian religion, he

can entertain no doubt of its truth, its divine original. The *real* difficulties and obscurities of the scriptures give him little trouble, much less the cavils of sceptics. He has the *witness in himself**, that the gospel is *the word of God*, the *incorruptible seed* † of holiness, and such felicity as the world never gave, and cannot take away. He cannot adequately describe his ‡ state. It is an UNSPEAKABLE gift. He feels it; and is grateful,

The excellent Norris, after having spent many years in the usual studies of academics, in logic, metaphysics, and other, what he calls, unconcerning curiosities, comes to the following resolution:

“ I think,” says he, “ I shall now chiefly apply myself to the reading of such books as are rather *persuasive* than

* 1 John, v. 10.

† 1 Pet. i. 23.

‡ THOMAS A KEMPIS thus attempts to describe the happy state, imperfectly indeed, but devoutly: “ *Frequens Christi visitatio cum homine interno, dulcis sermocinatio, grata consolatio, multa pax,*” &c.

“ *instructive* ; such as are *sapid*, pathetic,
 “ and divinely relishing ; such as warm,
 “ kindle, and enlarge the interior, and
 “ awaken *the divine sense* (or feeling) of
 “ the soul ; as considering with myself,
 “ that I have now, after so much reading
 “ and speculation, more need of HEAT
 “ than of *light*. Though if I were for
 “ more light still, I think *this would*
 “ *prove the best method of illumina-*
 “ *tion* ; and when all is done, the love of
 “ God is the best light of the soul. For
 “ I consider, with the excellent CARDI-
 “ NAL BONA, that a man may have
 “ knowledge without love ; but he that
 “ loves, although he wants sciences, hu-
 “ manly acquired, yet he will know more
 “ than human wisdom can teach him, be-
 “ cause he has that master *within him*, who
 “ teaches man knowledge *.”

If other students and teachers were to
 follow his example in this instance, there
 would be much more true devotion and sin-
 cere piety in the world ; and few would be

* *Via Compend. ad Deum.*

infidels,

infidels, except among the desperately profligate, who harden their hearts, and cloud their understandings by habitual vice and intemperance ; who *fear* Christianity should be true, and therefore, with fool-hardy presumption, resolve to deny it.

SECTION XXXI.

On the Seasons of Grace.

THERE are times when the mind seems sensible of a peculiar serenity; the understanding is clear to discern spiritual things, and the heart glows with sentiments of Christian piety and general benevolence. At those times, man appears to be exalted above the common level of mortality. All pure, all peace, all love, all joy, his nature endeavours to soar above the earth, and to reach the source of all excellence. A sweet complacency, in those moments, diffuses itself over the soul, and an internal satisfaction is experienced, which no language can describe; but which renders him who feels it as happy as it is possible to become in a sublunary existence.

These are the halcyon times which may be termed the seasons of grace; the seasons, when the God of mercy, compassion-

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ating the weary pilgrim, sends down the cup of comfort to exhilarate and reward him; displays the lamp of heaven, to illuminate his path as he travels in the valley.

These favours, as I firmly believe, are offered to all the sons of Adam who do not presumptuously and repeatedly and knowingly offend the donor; for that man may *grieve* the Spirit and *quench* the Spirit, we are told in the strong language of scripture.

But a proper reception of this divine benefit will secure its frequency and continuance. Our own endeavours must be exerted with vigilance and constancy, to preserve the *divine frame of mind* which it may have produced. Nothing can effect this but the avoidance of habitual vice and impurity, and the practice of virtue. But if, after all, there should be seasons of insensibility and coldness, it must not be concluded that the spiritual assistance is withdrawn in displeasure. For even in the darkest valley, an unseen hand can support and guide the pilgrim in his progress; and after the clouds shall

shall have prevailed their time, the sun will break forth with all its warmth and lustre.

It appears to me to be the first object of CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY to secure the duration and frequent recurrence of the seasons of grace. In order to accomplish this end, whatever conduces to the moral improvement of the heart must be pursued with ardour. The fine morality, discovered by the light of nature and the feelings of the heart, probably assisted, among the heathens, by divine interposition, may and ought to be called in to add something to the work of Christian improvement; for the best heathen ETHICS are founded on truth, and therefore immutably valuable. A state of grace without morality, I firmly believe, is not permitted by him who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity.

But the man who is blessed with the visitations of the divine Spirit, feels his heart spontaneously inclined to every thing that is lovely and of good report. Virtue appears to him amiable, and easy to be practised; and vice disgustful, at once the pollution and the misery

misery of his nature. All the angry passions subside in him; the gentle and benevolent affections grow in their place, and man becomes what he was before the lapse of Adam, and what the gospel revelation was designed to render him, a being little lower than the angels.

SECTION XXXII.

*Of mistaking the Effects of Imagination for
the Seasons of Grace.*

THERE are many who will scarcely allow the existence of any thing which they cannot subject to the notice of the senses. They must literally see the truth of every thing which requires their assent, or they will doubt its reality. To them, whatever is said on the subject of a spiritual world, or an invisible agency on the soul of man, appears to be the effusion of fancy, and the sick man's dream.

And indeed the experience of mankind justifies great caution in distinguishing between the actual operation of the Holy Spirit, and the delirious effects of a too lively imagination. The imagination, heated by the devotional flame, has often kindled a destructive fire. It is indeed the parent of fanaticism, in all its extremities, and all its evil

evil consequences. As, therefore, the real agency of the Holy Spirit is to be invited and cherished, so the mere imagination of it is to be most studiously avoided.

That the whole doctrine is not imaginary, is evident to him who reads and believes the gospel. Such operations are there plainly spoken of and promised as the greatest blessings to the human race. Their effects are described as great and sudden, in affording both comfort, holiness, and illumination.

The reality of seasons of grace cannot be questioned but by him who at the same time questions the whole system of revelation. And a rational man, it is to be believed, will find no difficulty in satisfying himself that he is not deluded by his imagination, when he feels himself particularly virtuous, pure, benevolent, and open to celestial influence.

But as all men are not governed by reason, and none are governed by it uniformly, it certainly is probable that the delusions of imagination may often be mistaken for

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supernatural assistance. A few cautionary suggestions on the subject may not, therefore, be superfluous.

Since it is possible that the best-intentioned may be thus deluded, let every man try his spirit by the fruits it produces; not by a sudden or momentary fruit, but by the frequency and abundance of its productions. If it *habitually* produces peace, joy, purity, piety, and benevolence, let no man attribute it to his imagination; but give the glory to God, and be grateful.

But if it display itself in pride, self-conceit, and contempt of others, in acts of violence, in disturbing good order, in any behaviour which seems to argue an opinion of *peculiar* inspiration from heaven, of a partial commission, delegated to reform the world by irregular, uncharitable, and offensive interposition; if it pretends to visions and illuminations unexperienced by the best and wisest of men; if it assumes the privilege of actually conversing IN PERSON with Jesus Christ, and talks of the hour and moment when the Holy Ghost

Ghost rushed upon the bosom; it is time to beware of the infatuation of a deluded fancy. There is certainly every reason to believe that such a temper of mind is not from God.

But it is folly and impiety to confound with these that sweet frame and disposition of mind, which the scriptures describe as descending from the Holy Ghost, and which has indeed every mark of divine origin.

He who condemns the doctrine of divine agency on the mind of man, as FANCIFUL, must, if he is consistent, include the whole of the Christian religion, and all that has ever been said or written in favour of it, under the same imputation. According to him, the fair edifice must melt away, like a palace of ice, when the sun of reason shines upon it. But we maintain that the true gospel, which is indeed the doctrine of grace, is the ROCK of ages.

SECTION XXXIII.

Of Seasons of Desertion, or supposed Absence of the Spirit.

THERE are seasons in the lives of good men, when their sense of spiritual things is comparatively dull; and many, at these times, have been alarmed with an idea of being totally deserted by the Spirit, and have fallen into a state of despondency. But if there were no other proof that the grace of God is still vouchsafed to them, their uneasiness alone would evince it. While pain is felt, the surgeon apprehends not a mortification.

But the alarm, it may be presumed, is, to the pious Christian, unnecessary. For it is certain that the visitations of the Holy Spirit are sometimes more sensible than at others; and that when they are not sensible
at

at all, its guidance and benign protection may continue unaltered. The light sometimes shines with a bright and strong effulgence, to guide us into the right way; but while we are proceeding in it safely and regularly, and without an inclination to deviate, or immediate danger of falling, the rays may be emitted less powerfully, because less necessary. The moment there appears danger of wandering or of stumbling, the lamp is ready to shine with instantaneous radiance. Thus an infant, just beginning to walk, is guided by the parent's hand, watched with the parent's eye, and encouraged by the parent's voice, and yet it is often permitted to go alone, without assistance or encouragement, in order to exercise its strength, and to give it a due degree of confidence. But the tender mother may still hold the leading-string unobserved by the infant, and, at the very first lapse, save the fall. The sun, though obscured by clouds, affords both light and warmth, guides mankind in all their operations,

tions, and supports both animal and vegetative life.

The mistaken opinion that ecstasy and rapture are always necessary to evince the presence of the Holy Spirit, has brought the doctrine into discredit among the sober and rational, and introduced much misery among the ignorant, the weak, and the fanciful. The sober and rational neither experienced such ardour without *intermission*, nor did they believe the nature of man, as he is now constituted, capable of supporting it. The ignorant, the weak, and the fanciful, endeavouring to raise themselves to a height which they could either not reach or not maintain, fell from disappointment to dejection, and from dejection to despair.

In truth, the influence of the Spirit rushes not like a continual torrent, but flows as a gentle river, which, indeed, for the most part, displays its silver surface in the meadows, but may sometimes conceal itself, without being lost, in a subterranean channel.

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While we retain faith, hope, and charity, and while we seek the favour of God in fervent prayer, we have every reason to believe that GRACE abounds in us, though we should not, for a considerable time, be favoured with the livelier experience of its immediate energy. If we persevere in a virtuous course, we may rest assured that God will, at all proper intervals, and for our reward and encouragement, shew us the light of his countenance.

Let the pious Christian remember, that HOPE is placed, in the celebrated enumeration of Christian virtues, next to faith, and before charity. Let him, therefore, take care not to indulge the least tendency to such melancholy ideas of desertion as may lead to despair. God will not behold a sincerely contrite heart, anxious to find grace, without affording it; and though, for wise purposes of trial, it is possible that he may not, for a short time, bestow it in its more *sensible* influences, yet there is every reason to believe,

lieve, that he who *sincerely grieves* because he thinks himself less *favoured* by the *Holy Spirit* than usual, is, on that very account, in a **STATE OF GRACE**, and therefore safe.

SECTION XXXIV.

Of the Doctrine that the Operations of the Holy Spirit are NEVER distinguishable from the Operations of our own Minds.

INGENIOUS and philosophical divines, desirous of discouraging, to the utmost of their power, all fanciful pretensions to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, have boldly affirmed that its influence is not to be distinguished from the ordinary operations of the human mind. Their endeavour to prevent the evils of a wild imagination deserves praise; but they should be cautious of misrepresenting the effects of divine agency, and denying truth, with a design of obviating error.

From the plain and repeated accounts of scripture, it appears that this divine agency produces a very great alteration in the mind; a much greater than could be produced by its own natural operations. It is God that worketh in you, saith St. Paul,

Paul, both to will and to do of his good pleasure *.

I speak with the utmost diffidence, when I say that it appears probable that such powerful *energy* is *sometimes* distinguishable from the spontaneous operations of the mind. I am sensible that the doctrine may open a door to fanatical extravagance ; but if it is the true doctrine, it ought to be maintained, whatever may be the consequences.

The influence of the Holy Ghost is represented in scripture as consolatory. When a good man, in deep affliction, feels, in consequence of his prayer and devotion, a spring of comfort flowing upon his mind, such as no reasoning of his own, no external circumstances, no condolence of his friends could produce, is there not reason to believe that the influence of God's Holy Spirit is upon him, and that it is distinguishable from his own thoughts and imagination ? The operations of his own mind lead only to horror and dismay ; but a light rises up in the darkness ; and is it not easy

* Phil. ii. 13.

to perceive that this unexpected radiance is the day-spring from on high ?

When the pious Christian, employed in fervent prayer, finds himself full of holy joy and humble confidence, and feels his heart melt within him, overflowing with love of God and charity to man, is there not more presumption in attributing this state to the mere operations of his own mind, than to the God of spirits, actually dispensing that grace or favour which he has promised, in the gospel, to the faithful ?

When temptations to sin assault with violence, and a man feels himself strengthened, so as to be able to overcome, at the very moment of his intended surrender, shall he erect the victorious trophies to his own virtue ? His own reason and resolution had betrayed him, the operations of his own unassisted mind tended to concession ; but God gave him strength from his holy place, and to God only is due the praise.

Innumerable are the circumstances and situations in life, in which comfort, illuminations, protection, and strength are afforded

fording in a degree and manner, which it is much more unreasonable to think could be produced by the mere operations of the mind, than that they were supplied by the author and giver of all good.

In making the distinction between the operations of the Holy Spirit and those of the human mind, the wisest men will ever be obnoxious to mistake. The weak, wicked, and hypocritical may deceive themselves or others in it, to the injury or offence of many. But still the inconveniences of this perversion cannot entirely justify divines in their confidential and repeated assertions, that since the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, such as were bestowed on the apostles, have ceased, the operations of the Holy Ghost on the mind are *in no instance or degree* to be distinguished from its own operations. These assertions approach nearly to an entire denial of the doctrine: a very dangerous and impious blasphemy*.

* * *Nam si tota Dei actio consistit in clarâ evangelii propositione, opportunè factâ, cur omnipotentia ad id*

“ *requiritur? Quorsum adhibentur a PAULO magul-*
 “ *sicæ illæ voces, ad describendam, quam exerit Deus in*
 “ *nobis, omnipotentiam, Eph. i. 18, 19. quum dicit esse*
 “ *υπερβαλλον μεγαλος δυναμως et κατὰ τῆς ενεργειας του κρα-*
 “ *τους της ισχυος.*—To assert that the POWER of God
 working in us, differs not perceptibly from the or-
 dinary power of man.—“ *Annon hoc est actionem*
 “ *omnipotentem Dei obscurare et in nihilum ferme redi-*
 “ *gere?* TURETIN.

It may here be asked, What man can judge *infalli-*
bly of that which passes in the mind of another? Yet
 many RATIONAL divines *dogmatically* declare to
 their disciples, that it is *impossible*, in any circum-
 stances, to distinguish the energy of God's grace on
 their hearts, from the common and *natural* workings
 of the passions and imagination. This is to assume a
 power of discernment which belongs to him only,
 to “ *whom all hearts are open, and from whom no se-*
 “ *crets are hidden.*”

SECTION XXXV.

Of devotional Feelings or SENTIMENTS.

THE pious devotee has exposed himself to the derision of the scorner, by talking of spiritual feelings which he could not accurately describe; and the reality of which can never be proved by *external* testimony.

But I know not why the word *feeling*, which, in this age, is applied to all occasions, should not be applied to religion. The lover, the artist, the connoisseur enlarge upon the acuteness of their feelings in the contemplation of the excellence they admire. The man of delicacy is for ever boasting of his fine feelings, and the beautiful embarrassment which they create. The spectator in a theatre, the hearer at a concert, expatiates on the effect which the spectacle and the music have produced

on his *feelings* ; and shall not he who contemplates the universe, and adores the maker of it, and of those powers by which he both adores and contemplates, shall not he be allowed to *feel* ; and when his bosom glows with love, gratitude, and devotion, shall his pretensions to feelings be stigmatized as the delirious language of a wild enthusiasm ?

The frigid temper of scholastic theology would deny the reality of every thing which, from its own defect of sensibility, it never yet experienced.

That the divine Spirit, operating on the mind, should cause in it a SERENITY, a tranquillity, a comfort, which no words can express, is highly credible ; when a thousand inferior agents, or causes, are able to produce emotions of various kinds ; gentle or violent, painful or pleasing. But well-meaning divines, endeavouring to explode those extravagant pretensions to *feeling*, which have deluded the vulgar, disturbed society, and driven many to madness, have denied the possibility of such SENTIMENTS,
and

and attributed them entirely to the force of fancy, to folly, and to hypocrisy. They deserved praise for their endeavour to prevent evil ; but by exceeding the bounds of truth in their censure, they prevented good at the same time. For their doctrines unintentionally taught men to neglect the benign seasons of grace, and to confound the holy assistance of heaven with the mere operations of the human mind. They allow that the scripture plainly speaks of heavenly influence ; but they boldly assert, that it can NEVER be distinguished from the ordinary actings of natural sentiment, intellect, passion, and imagination.

The word feelings, in religion, has been treated with such contempt and ridicule, that the truth is in danger of suffering, without a fair examination. Such is the force of words and prepossession. But let the word be changed to the synonymous term, SENTIMENT, and then let any one object, with solid argument, to giving the name of religious sentiment to that pious, virtuous, pure state of mind, which

is caused by the influence of the Holy Ghost, in the happy hour when God, in his mercy, showers it down, more abundantly than usual, on the human bosom.

But, on this topic, great caution is required; for men, especially the ignorant and passionate, are prone to attribute their own dreams and emotions to demoniacal or celestial impressions. Such a persuasion leads to spiritual pride*, to a perseverance in error and vice, to cruelty, and to persecution. He who is acquainted with ecclesiastical history, will recollect many dreadful examples of false feelings, and pretended inspiration. The deluded and deluding persons have represented themselves as prophets, new Messiahs, and even as God; and what is more extraordinary, they have persuaded many to believe them, and have conducted a willing

* False religion is always ostentatious. Its object is to be noticed, admired, revered. When men talk of their FEELINGS, there is reason to suspect vanity, hypocrisy, or knavery. It is justly said, NON EST RELIGIO, UBI OMNIA PATENT.

multitude

multitude to whatever mischief their zealous hearts erroneously conceived.

While, therefore, a conviction that *there is indeed a religious SENTIMENT, or a divine and holy feeling*, which impresses the heart more forcibly than any argument, induces me to maintain so important a truth; I must, in the most anxious and importunate terms, express my desire that none may teach, and none submit to be taught, a belief, at this period, in EXTRAORDINARY inspiration.

All spiritual pride, all cruelty, all persecution, are, in their nature, repugnant to the Spirit of grace: and though they probably proceed from strong feelings, they are feelings arising from passion, fancy, and actual insanity. Whoever is under their influence, must have recourse to the SPIRIT OF GRACE, that his feelings or sentiments may become all gentle, benevolent, peaceable, and humble. If his extravagancies still continue to carry him to injurious actions and disorderly behaviour, applica-
tion

tion must be made to the physician, or, in cases of extremity, the civil magistrate.

There can be nothing in the genuine **SENTIMENT**, or *feelings*, occasioned by the Spirit of God, which is not friendly to man, improving to his nature, and co-operating with all that sound philosophy and benignant laws have ever done to advance the happiness of the human race.

SECTION XXXVI.

Of Enthusiasm.

ENTHUSIASM is commonly used and understood in a bad sense; but, if its real meaning * be attended to, it may certainly admit of a very fine one. It means a consciousness or persuasion that the Deity is actually present, by an immediate emanation or impulse on the mind of the enthusiast; the reality of which, in certain cases, is the doctrine of the church and of the gospel; a doctrine sufficiently consonant to reason, and not necessarily connected with self-delusion, folly, madness, or fanaticism.

But because many have made pretensions to the privilege of God's immediate presence in their hearts, whose lives and conduct gave reason to suspect that they were not thus favoured, the word enthusi-

* EN ΘΕΟΣ.

asm, which, in common language, expressed their false pretensions, has fallen into disgrace, and now often implies no more than the idea of a bigot, or a devotee, weakly deluded by the fond visions of a disordered imagination.

But let not enthusiasm of the better kind, a modest confidence of being assisted, as the gospel promises, by the agency of the Holy Spirit, be involved in undeserved disgrace*. We are taught that the

Divinity

1. *GRATIA IMMEDIATA, qualis ab orthodoxis docetur, nihil habet commune cum enthusiasmo, sed diversimodè ab eo differt.*

1. *Enthusiasmus novas quærit Revelationes extra verbum; sed GRATIA IMMEDIATA nullas, quia verbum semper comitatur, nec aliud agit, quam ut illud menti imprimat.*

2. *In enthusiasmo, objecta quæ menti imprimuntur non extrinsecus adveniunt, sed intus a Spiritu per arcanas inspirationes suggeruntur. Sed hic objectum supponitur semper extrinsecus advenire et ex verbo peti.*

3. *Enthusiasmus fit per subitos motus, qui ipsum discursum et ratiocinationem antevertunt, et sæpe excludunt. Sed Spiritus operatio non excludit, sed se-*

cum

Divinity resides in the pure heart. The belief of it is indeed enthusiasm, but it is enthusiasm of the noble, the virtuous, the necessary kind. The ardour which it inspires is laudable. Like that of all other good things, the corruption and abuse of it is productive of great evil; but still it is not itself to be exploded.

There is, indeed, a cold philosophy, which seems to discourage all the warm sentiments of affection, and will hardly allow them in any thing which concerns religion. It aims at reducing theology to a scholastic science, and would willingly descant of the love of God, and the sublimest discoveries

" cum trahit ratiocinationem et gratum voluntatis consensum.

" Denique, ne plura discrimina jam persequamur, enthusiasmus non infert cordis mutationem; et mentem afficit, IMMUTATA sæpe manente VOLUNTATE; unde in IMPIOS etiam cadit, ut in Balaamo et aliis visum; sed OPERATIO GRATIÆ necessario infert cordis mutationem et sanctitatis studium."

TURRETIN.

This author here speaks of *enthusiasm* in its vulgar sense—which is certainly a DISEASE; a mental FEVER, attended with delirium.

of

of the gospel, in the same frigidity of temper as it would explain the metaphysics of Aristotle. But there is a natural and laudable ardour in the mind of man, whenever it contemplates magnificent objects; and which is certainly to be expected, when that object is the Lord God omnipotent, and the human soul, the particle of Deity, aspiring at re-union with the Supreme Being, and meditating on immortality.

Is there not an ardour of enthusiasm, which admires and produces excellence in the arts of music, painting, and poetry? And shall it be allowed in the humble province of imitative skill, and exploded in contemplating the GREAT ARCHETYPE of all; the source of life, beauty, order, grandeur, and sublimity? Shall I hear a symphony, or behold a picture, a statue, or a fine prospect, with rapture, and at the same time consider God, who made both the object and the sense that perceives it, with the frigid indifference of abstracted philosophy? Shall I meditate on heaven,
hell,

hell, death, and judgment, with all the coolness with which a lawyer draws a formal instrument, an arithmetician computes a sum, or a logician forms a syllogism in mood and figure?

Such coolness, on such subjects, arises not from superiority of wisdom, but from pride and vain philosophy, from acquired *callosity* or natural insensibility of temper. God has bestowed on man a liveliness of fancy, and a warmth of affection, as well as an accuracy and acuteness of reason and intellect; he has bestowed a **HEART** vibrating with the tender chords of love and pity, as well as a *brain* furnished with fibres adapted to subtle disquisition.

The scriptures afford many examples of a laudable and natural enthusiasm. *My heart was hot within me*, says David, and the warm poetry of the psalms, the rapturous style of prophecy, are proofs that those who have been *singularly favoured* by God, were of tempers which the modern philosophers would call enthusiastical. Their fire was kindled at the altar. St. John

John was a burning and a shining light. St. Paul was avowedly of an ardent temper, and a glowing imagination; nor did our Saviour himself express his sentiments in the cold language of the Aristotelian school, but with emphasis and pathos.

They who rail at enthusiasm, in general terms, and without making a due distinction between the scriptural and the false kind, consist either of those who laudably endeavour to discredit the pretensions of the hypocrite, and the weak brother; or of those who, from their speculative habits, their cold tempers, or irreligious lives, labour to discountenance all pretensions to an excellence and purity, which they never felt, and to which they could not rise.

Whoever believes what the scriptures indisputably affirm, that the *body is the TEMPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT*, and that he actually resides in it, when it is purified sufficiently for his reception, is so far an ENTHUSIAST; but let him glory in the appellation, for he is such an one as every
Christian,

Christian, who thinks and feels in conformity to the gospel he professes, must be of necessity. If he denies the agency of the Spirit of God on the soul of man, he denies the most important doctrine of revelation, and must be a stranger to its finest effects on the human bosom.

But since such is the case, let those who very laudably write against enthusiasm* of the false kind, take care not to confound truth with falsehood; and not to proceed to such an extreme in refuting the pretensions of hypocrites, fools, or knaves, as to infringe on the genuine and sublime doctrine of grace, the glory of the everlasting gospel.

* There is an old saying, "Give a dog an ill name, and they'll hang him." Thus also, give the doctrine of grace, though plainly EVANGELICAL, the name of ENTHUSIASM OR METHODISM, and a very great part of mankind will immediately explode it, without the slightest examination.

The name of *methodist* has been given to all the clergy, who preach or profess the doctrines of the reformation, as expressed in the articles, homilies, and liturgy of the church, to which they have solemnly assented, in the presence of God and man.

SECTION XXXVII.

Cautions concerning Enthusiasm.

So many and so melancholy are the effects of mistaken and excessive enthusiasm, recorded in the annals of mankind, that wise men are justly alarmed at every appearance of it, and little inclined to give it indulgence.

Whatever there has been of savage cruelty, whatever of public violence, and tumult, and confusion, the utmost extremes of all these evils, in all their consequences, have been equalled by the frantic extravagance of false enthusiasm. It has exhibited, in some tempers, all the symptoms of a malignant disease, and terminated, at last, in real and most deplorable insanity.

If then it be wisdom to obviate the approaches of distemper, those men have evinced themselves wise, who have laboured to discourage, by all the arts of ridicule

ridicule and argument, the earliest tendencies among the people to religious phrenzy. There are innocent follies, and there is a madness, which is only the object of compassion; but the folly and madness of the bigot are detestable, because they are destructive as a pestilence. Against such an enemy to human happiness, philosophy has urged her best reason, justice has unsheathed her sword, and the stage, to complete the triumph, has played all the batteries of derision.

But argumentation, coercive force, and even ridicule, have been found ineffectual. All these are classed, by the bigot, under the term persecution, and persecution, like a current of air, adds violence to fire. The gentler, the kinder, the more Christian mode of expostulation and rational concession, wherever concession can be made, may, like a balsamic vulnerary, heal the sore which opposition would cause to rankle.

I therefore do not deny the justice of the enthusiast's pretensions, who professes himself

self actuated by a belief that the Holy Spirit condescends to assist him in virtuous endeavours, by a sacred influence from Heaven. But I caution him against entertaining, for a moment, the presumptuous idea, that the same Spirit which assists him, does not, with equal readiness and efficacy, assist his pious neighbour also, and all sincere believers, throughout Christendom, however distinguished by sect, church, or persuasion.

I urge him to try his Spirit, by the infallible touchstone of scripture. Is it pure, is it peaceable, is it gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy? If it should be deficient in any of these amiable qualities, let him be cautious of indulging it, lest the Spirit should be of a diabolical, and not of a heavenly nature.

And in what manner is he to form a judgment of himself, since the heart is deceitful; and to know oneself is the most

* James, iii. 17.

difficult of sciences? If his high pretensions are accompanied with a bad life; if he be disposed to contend with rancour and violence in support of his pretensions; if he be disposed to involve all who think differently from him in perdition; if he decrie good works; and if, with every appearance of sanctity, and many external acts of piety and benevolence, he reserves to himself some *secret and favourite vice*, he may rest assured, that the Spirit which actuates him is not from above.

If he be inclined to neglect, despise, and revile decent and useful ordinances, such as are countenanced by scripture, and have a direct tendency to preserve peace, benevolence, and piety; if he prefers himself to all regular and learned ministers, whether in the establishment or out of it, and preaches to ignorant and deluded multitudes in the fields, with the air and voice of phrenzy, he may have just reason to fear, though he should have ten thousand in his train, that he has carried his pre-

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tensions

tensions to the Spirit beyond that wisdom, moderation, and love of order, which the author of our religion taught, both by precept and example.

If, in his writings, he applies the scriptural language to himself, and assumes the authority of a primitive apostle ; if, at the same time, he expresses his ideas in such a manner as to excite the laughter and contempt of men of sense and approved goodness, he may infer that his spiritual pride has hurried him to the verge of insanity ; and, as he values his health and happiness, should exert himself to remove the febrile symptoms, which are at once contagious and fatal.

When mechanics, of confined education, and not remarkable for natural discernment, or peculiar virtue and goodness, think themselves better able to instruct the people, than a numerous class of their fellow-citizens, who have been separated, from their youth, for sacred offices, instructed in learning of various kinds, versed in the original languages of scripture, the
very

very idea implies so great a degree of pride and self-conceit, that it cannot come from the gentle, unassuming spirit of him who was himself meek and lowly, and who everywhere taught his disciples the lesson of humility.

If such persons urge, in defence of their extravagant behaviour, their dereliction of their trades and daily labours, and their assumption of the priest's office, a particular CALL, from Heaven itself, louder than reaches the ears of others, let them, before they believe themselves, or persuade others, produce, as a credential of their commission, a miracle. If they find themselves utterly unable to do this, let them return to the workshop and warehouse, renounce the *deceitful* spirit, and evince their attainment of the true, by humility, charity, modesty, and obedience to lawful superiors; by a *study to be quiet*, and an attention to their own business.

From such practices, and such persons as I have alluded to, has arisen much of the disgrace which has fallen on true and laudable

enthusiasm, or that wisdom which is infused into the pure, gentle, and charitable heart from above. False enthusiasm should be discouraged, that *true* religion may grow and flourish; as the weed should be plucked up, to give room for the wholesome plant to strike root, and expand itself in foliage and blossoms, and produce good fruit in abundance.

SECTION XXXVIII.

Of being RIGHTEOUS overmuch.

IT seems to be very doubtful, whether the scriptural phrase of being *righteous overmuch*, signifies that sort of excess which methodists and fanatics are apt to indulge. I am rather induced to believe, that it means an extreme rigour in exacting from *others* an unerring rectitude. “Be not righteous overmuch; why shouldst thou destroy *thyself**?” That is, “Establish not, by thy severity, a rule so strict as must, if put in force against *thyself*, involve thee, imperfect as thou art, in destruction.” The prohibition seems to me to quadrate with the old observation, that justice in the extreme is extreme injustice †.

There are other interpretations of the words at least as probable as that which confines it to the over-sanctity of the methodist or bigot.

* Eccles. vii. 16.

† *Summum jus, summa injuria.*

The ingenious and pious Dr. Trapp has taken the words in the latter sense, and written, with great force of argument, against the extravagances of methodism. Perhaps the words of his text did not properly authorize him in deriving the doctrine from them which he has laid down; but, whether they did or not, I think he had reason on his side, when he endeavoured to explode all superstitious excesses which are subversive of true religion, injurious to society, and painful to the deluded individual.

Philosophers, by the light of nature, discovered, in the earliest ages, the wisdom of avoiding extremes; and no precepts are more common than those which recommend the golden mediocrity. These were undoubtedly suggested by actual experience, and a careful study of the human constitution. If they are just and proper, when applied to philosophy, there is every reason to think them equally so, when applied to religion, which is the perfection of philosophy. Excess, in the very name, implies culpability, even when the things

things in which it appears are of a virtuous and laudable nature.

So that whoever advances his virtues beyond the line of rectitude, errs no less than he who stops, at an equal interval, on this side of it. Yet, at the same time, I must observe, that there is something far more noble and generous in errors of excess than of defect; and the virulence which has been shewn in refuting the poor methodist, who has been tormenting himself with superfluous austerities, seems to me to arise from a want of good-nature and charity, far more criminal than the mistaken discipline of a zealous devotee.

That part of the methodists who are sincere in their rigid self-denial, and in all the active and passive virtues of their persuasion, are certainly objects of kindness and compassion, rather than of severe animadversion.

The church, and the protestant dissenters, it appears, teach the doctrine of grace; a doctrine which, I believe, the methodists consider as of the first moment;

and for the sake of attending to which with more earnestness, they seceded from the church and meeting-house to the tabernacle. Their preachers, they found, were used to dwell upon that subject, more than on any others; and with a degree of vehemence not usual or approved by men of more learning, moderation, and humility. They were caught by the sound, and taught to hate both the church and all regular ministers with a hatred truly unchristian. The church and the ministers, it seems, were not sufficiently holy for their purpose. The church and the ministers did not preach the gospel in its purity; and neither its doctrine nor its discipline were sufficiently strict and severe.

The dissemination of such ideas may answer the ends of self-appointed leaders, who wish to increase their importance, by drawing a multitude after them. Accusation will generally be heard with attention. Pretensions to superior holiness is one of the most successful means of deceit. The multitude are attracted by these, and
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a thousand other arts, co-operating with the natural tendency which they feel to superstition and fanaticism. They become self-tormentors; lose most of the comforts, and neglect many of the duties of life.

In the church, their favourite doctrine of grace *ought to be* inculcated in the manner which both reason, scripture, and experience best approve; for the doctrine of grace is most fully declared to be the doctrine of the church of England; and if the ministers are reluctant to preach it in all its force, it is from a fear of falling into the sin and disgrace of *over-much righteousness*. It is the humble endeavour of my treatise on this subject, to stimulate preachers to enlarge on the doctrine of grace; and by those means to bring back the numerous sheep who have strayed from their flock. There is the sort of food in which the sheep will shew that they delight, if the shepherds will but bring it forth; and indeed there is little doubt but that most of them do, on some occasions; but if the sheep

hunger and thirst after more than they receive, the good shepherd will not fail to open all the stores with which the scriptures abundantly supply him.

With respect to doctrine, the over-righteous Christian, as he is now called, will thus have no cause to complain of defect in the church; and with respect to moral discipline, it is very certain that self-denial, mortification, fasting, active beneficence, and all Christian perfection, is taught by the church and her ministers, with great force of argument and authority. Every Christian may carry the moral discipline of his religion to whatever lengths his conscience or inclination may urge him.

It must be confessed, that such is the moderation of the church and her pastors in the PRESENT AGE, that the duties which they teach are not urged with that unnatural rigour which precludes the rational enjoyment of life. It is a cheerful church, and for that reason the more estimable. It requires no excessive austerities. It aims at assisting poor erring mortals in overcoming

- coming their weakness and misery ; but it does not add to them, by requiring the sacrifice of health, ease, peace, society, cheerfulness, and innocent gaiety. It does not condemn those, with whom it cannot agree in opinion, with uncharitable severity. It is gentle and candid ; it is accommodated to such a creature as man, for ever aiming at good, but, from weakness, continually relapsing into some degree of evil. It does not, like the severe system of the over-righteous, inflame and aggravate the wounds of its patients, but, with lenient balsamics, assuages their anguish *.

And if the over-righteous object that regularly-bred ministers want vehemence and earnestness, I affirm that the objection cannot be *universally* well-founded. Men, having various degrees of talents, and various degrees of sensibility, will have a correspondent variety in their modes of delivery. The lively by nature, with very

* By the CHURCH I wish to be understood all those who are united to Christ by the Holy Ghost, wherever they dwell, and by whatever *denomination* they are distinguished. The WORLD, in the scriptural sense, consists of all who are not so united.

little sense of religion, may be animated in their discourses; the dull by nature, with a meaning very honest and pious, will be poor orators. And it always happens, in a very large body of men, that some are idle and irreligious; though circumstances may have led them to assume a profession where carelessness and impiety are doubly culpable. But such is the present state of human nature. He who demands more perfection than experience has ever yet known, is unreasonable and *over-righteous*. If some men have less pretension, and less vehemence, than those who are called the *OVER-RIGHTEOUS*, they have probably less hypocrisy, less folly, and less spiritual arrogance. Over-righteousness, with all its pretensions to *humility*, is the parent as well as the child of pride.

After all, let us remember that there is an *under-righteousness* (if I may use the term) as well as an over-righteousness; and that mankind are much apter to err from defect than excess. While hypocrisy and fanaticism are avoided, let us not, in the present times, be alarmed at danger from excessive piety.

SECTION XXXIX.

All extravagant and selfish Pretensions to the Spirit to be anxiously avoided, as they proceed from and cherish Pride, and are frequently accompanied with Immorality.

OSTENTATIOUSLY to pretend to greater portions of the Spirit than others, is alone a very unfavourable symptom, as it is a presumptive proof of two wants, not compatible with the Spirit's benignant influence : the want of humility, and the want of charity. It is no wonder, therefore, that those who have made such pretensions, have disgraced them by the wickedness of their lives ; and have induced ill-judging men hastily to consider the whole doctrine of divine assistance as a mere delusion.

Hypocrites, in fanatical times, when the appearance of extraordinary piety was conducive to advancement in wealth and honours,

nours, were sure to go farther in their pretensions, than the modesty of true professors could permit or excuse : but that deceitfulness of heart which produces hypocrisy, leads to all other bad conduct ; and religion has been disgraced by the singular profligacy of ostentatious professors.

Knaves of the very worst kind, who have no other object than to avail themselves of the credulity of others, are likely at all times to put on a cloak and a mask, which may render them externally respectable, and facilitate their purposes of deceit. Nothing seduces the ignorant and unexperienced so easily as the appearance of extraordinary sanctity ; and nothing has been more frequently assumed, for the accomplishment of ambitious and lucrative designs. When these designs have been accomplished, the cloak and the mask have been thrown aside, as useless incumbrances, and the villain has stood forth in his proper shape and colour.

Men of weak heads and warm hearts have proceeded to the most extravagant
lengths

lengths in pretensions to sanctity; and at the same time, from the want of solid virtue, have fallen into deplorable sins. Their sins derived additional deformity in the eyes of the people, from the contrast of assumed sanctity; and the world was ready to exclaim that all religion must be vain, if, in men who display so much of it, it contributes so little to wisdom and virtue.

Great sinners, unwilling to tread the rugged road of virtue, have thought it an easier and pleasanter mode of avoiding the consequences of their enormities, to persuade themselves of sudden conversions, and peculiar favour from heaven; and to compensate for inward impurity by outward sanctity, and for disobedience in things essential, by intemperate zeal in things indifferent, formal, and merely ostentatious.

Thus spiritual pride, want of charity, hypocrisy, knavery, folly, and extreme wickedness, have given rise to extraordinary pretensions to the Spirit, and verified the observation, that the wickedest of mankind

amine whether his virtues and good dispositions abound in retirement, and without the least parade whatever, or the smallest applause or reward of men. If he does good privately, and avoids the eyes of admirers, I think he may entertain an humble confidence that he has the *favour of God*. He has, in consequence, a source of joy within him, which no man taketh away. He has the bread of life, and *feeds on it in his heart by faith with thanksgiving*. He is silently and unostentatiously happy, neither courting the notice of the world, nor regarding its unjust censure. He is particularly careful, that no ill-treatment shall cause him to violate the law of charity. His chief concern is to bear and yet forbear; to *be* rather than to *seem* good.

SECTION XL.

Affected Sanctity, Demureness, Canting, Sourness, Censoriousness, ignorant and illiterate Preaching, no Marks of a State of Grace, but contribute to bring the whole Doctrine of Divine Energy into Contempt, and to diffuse Infidelity.

RELIGION is lovely. Her voice is melodious, and her aspect delightful. How has she been deformed! She has been taught to utter jargon with the hoarse croaking of the portentous raven, or to scream with the terrific howlings of the bird of night. Her face has been changed from the face of an angel to a gorgon's head, surrounded with snakes. She has been rendered a bugbear, terrifying all who approach her, instead of a gentle nursing mother, inviting wretched

wretched mortals to her fostering bosom, by the tenderest blandishments of maternal love.

Men of natural sense, improved by a learned education, and polished by all the elegancies of cultivated life, have turned from her, thus disguised as she appears, with disgust and horror. They have devoted themselves to a seducing philosophy, and left religion, thus disfigured, to the gross vulgar, whom they erroneously conceived were naturally attached to the horrors of a cruel and gloomy, as well as a silly, superstition.

Is it not desirable to vindicate Christianity from such dishonour? to show that her most important doctrine, the doctrine of divine energy, leads to every disposition that it is gentle, amiable, and beneficent; that it exalts, refines, and mollifies the human bosom; and while it kindles a lively and pleasant hope of future felicity, improves every real enjoyment of the present life? Such a representation, and it certainly is a just one, must invite every man, who

who feels duly for himself or others, within the Christian pale.

The Spirit is a spirit of truth, and therefore must be adverse to all affectation of sanctity, all studied severity of aspect and demeanour, intended only to excite external respect, and to impress on the spectators, often for the sake of interest, as well as from vanity, an idea of spiritual pre-eminence. The Spirit is a loving spirit, and therefore very unlike that of the sour, censorious pretenders, who condemn all innocent amusements, and think none capable of divine favour but themselves, and those who entertain their sentiments on points perfectly indifferent in the sight of God, and of every reasonable man. The Spirit is a spirit of wisdom, which implies a due degree of knowledge and ability for every undertaking we voluntarily engage in, and therefore cannot approve the preaching of illiterate persons, who are unacquainted, not only with the languages in which the scriptures were written, but often with their own; who
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are fitter to be catechumens than catechists; to sit at the feet of Gamaliel, than to usurp his chair. Learning may not be requisite in the pious hearer, but is certainly so in every one who assumes the office of an instructor. He is not an honest man, who professes and is paid to instruct others, without having exerted himself to the utmost to procure a competent store of knowledge. The operations of the Holy Spirit, accompanying his endeavours, may make a good Christian in his private capacity; may give him faith and knowledge sufficient for his salvation; but they do not, since the time of the apostles, bestow a knowledge of languages, or qualify ALONE, without the aids of human learning, for a TEACHER of theology.

The annals of suicide, if any such there were, and the registers of Bedlam, might bear witness to the mischiefs caused by fanatical mechanics, with strong passions and imaginations, but of feeble and narrow intellects, wildly haranguing weak and aged men and women on their lost state, on
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their danger of eternal damnation, and a thousand other most awful matters, which at once puzzle the understandings, and dismay the hearts of the deluded multitude. True Christianity shudders at the sufferings of well-meaning devotees, wantonly inflicted by ignorant zealots, seeking self-importance, and gratifying the pride of their hearts, as *leaders* of a wretched tribe, whom noise and high pretensions collect easily in every populous city, and in every poor neighbourhood, where the necessity of constant manual employment for the means of subsistence precludes all contemplation, and the improvement of judgment that might result from it.

In compassion to these people, who deserve every assistance, because they certainly intend every thing that is good, though they do and suffer great evil, through defect of judgment, I wish the regular clergy, both of the established and dissenting church, to feed them with the food in which they delight—the heavenly manna, the doctrine of grace. There is

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no doubt but that many of them do so occasionally ; but I submit it to them whether it ought not to be a leading and principal topic in every discourse inculcating morality. I beg leave to suggest that EVANGELICAL preaching, in which the doctrine of divine energy must always make a very considerable part, would keep their congregations from wandering after men, who have no other qualification for preaching but zeal, real or pretended ; zeal without knowledge, or a knowledge confined, superficial, and unaccompanied with general charity or sound discretion. With all their defects, they do, however, preach the doctrine of grace. The people know this to be the genuine doctrine of the gospel, and therefore they flock by tens of thousands to hear it, regardless of the barbarism of the self-appointed orator, who leaves the loom and the last for the pulpit.

The pearl of great price they estimate highly, however rudely it may be set ; but how much more would they prize it, if it were

were set, adequately to its immense value, in the purest gold, by the hand of a master? If men of sound and extensive learning, of true taste and eloquence, were to recommend it, with all the beauties of proper language, the field-preacher would rant in solitude, and the tabernacle would be as empty as most of the parish churches in London. To them I refer the inquirer, who wishes to know how little the most decent and studied discourses on morality, or practical religion, avail to attract the people. Let him leave a while his books and library, and read the volume of real life. We have had enough of words, enough of systems, enough of controversy; let us study and teach what is really and efficiently useful to the mass of the people, what improves human nature, renders life as comfortable as the condition of humanity will admit, and opens a pleasing prospect, when life must be relinquished, beyond the grave.